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## **Poland: Bishops, Advent messages and initiatives. “Open your hearts to the hope brought by Christ”**

In its Advent message, the Presidency of the Polish Bishops' Conference (composed of the Bishops' President, Mgr. Stanisław Godecki; Vice-President, Mgr. Marek Jędraszewski; and Secretary General, Mgr. Artur Miziński) asks the faithful to “open their hearts to the hope brought by Christ”. The Bishops call for a “strengthening of the faith” which should lead to the “transformation not only of individuals but also of the whole of society”. In the run-up to Christmas, they also encourage participation in the traditional morning liturgies, the Sacrament of Penance and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, both individually and collectively, in compliance with the current health regulations. The message also insists on the need to pray for “peace and the Christian identity” of the Poles. The Archbishop of Krakow, Mgr. Marek Jędraszewski, in addition to the message of the Presidency of which he is a member, also made a pressing appeal on the eve of Advent. He called on his Diocese to accept any child, even those who are ill or malformed, for they “cannot be seen as a burden or a threat” as “the promoters of the killing of unborn children, in the name of absolute freedom, would like us to see them”. The Archbishop of Katowice and president of the Pastoral Care Council of the Episcopate, Mgr. Wiktor Skworc, for his part, recalled in his message the opening of the new pastoral year within the framework of the three years dedicated to the Eucharist. He stressed that “ultimately, as a result of the pandemic, the Church, deprived of many of her resources, is now preaching the Good News more than ever before, evangelising and teaching to large numbers of faithful”. The prelate also evidenced an increase in the Church's charitable activities, and the growth of volunteering.

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