



Województwo  
Śląskie



Instytut Myśli Polskiej  
im. Wojciecha Korfanteo

Instytut Myśli Polskiej  
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# Welcome Poland!

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One of the momentous events in the history of the Second Polish Republic was the incorporation of Upper Silesia into Poland, which was the crowning achievement of the self-sacrificing national liberation struggles in three uprisings. After the ratification of the border between Poland and Germany, Upper Silesia, the latest of all regions, came under Polish sovereignty.

In June 1922, ceremonies of the takeover of the Upper Silesian area by the Polish government camp were organised in the post-plebiscite areas. Welcome gates were constructed to symbolise recognition, openness and hospitality towards the numerous delegates who came to celebrate the success of independence. Among the numerous main actors of those days (General Stanisław Szeptycki, MP Wojciech Korfanty, Voivode Józef Rymer or Deputy Minister Zygmunt Seyda) agitating for the Polish cause was the bishop's delegate - Monsignor Jan Kapica. Jan Kapica's biography illustrates the difficult fate of Upper Silesia and loyalty to Poland. He was born on February 2, 1866 in Miedźna (Pszczyna county) in a peasant family. He began his education in the municipal school in Pszczyna with the Borromeo Sisters and in the Bielsko middle school. He passed his final exams in 1888. He studied theology at the University of Wrocław. He was ordained on June 15, 1892. As a curate, he ministered in Gierałtowice, Siemianowice and Berlin. From 1898 he was the parish priest in Tychy. During this period, he became known as a social and political activist. Kapica was an activist of the abstinence movement - he founded about 100 sobriety fraternities, as well as libraries and cultural and educational centres. He also gained popularity thanks to his role as an outstanding orator. He placed his political sympathies in the Center party, from which he moved to the Polish Circle in the Prussian parliament. During the plebiscite, he called for people to stand for Poland. From 1919, he chaired the Silesian Academic Union, bringing together priests of pro-Polish orientation. Appointed by Cardinal Bertram as a bishop's delegate for the Polish part of Upper Silesia. Member of the authorities of the Diocese of Katowice. He died on June 10, 1930 in Tychy. Father Jan Kapica

played a significant role in fostering patriotic awareness among the faithful. Many of the priest's writings have survived. As part of the 100th anniversary of Silesia's return to the Motherland, it is worth recalling the occasional proclamations of Fr. Kapica addressed not only to the faithful, but to all those who were not indifferent to the struggle for the belonging of the Upper Silesian people to Poland. One of them was a message written on June 1, 1922, which Fr. Kapica ordered, as part of his sermons, to read his message „To the Catholics of the Silesian Voivodeship” written in Polish and in German for bilingual parishes, which meant the use of a conciliatory style: „Let us not blame German citizens for our difficult past. Only the guilty and responsible state system has ceased to exist for us and cannot harm us. Therefore, let us not talk today about what was, but let us sow seeds on the soil of the future, which is also important and dear to the entire population of the voivodeship. The Republic of Poland will also demand from the German population, as it demanded from the Polish, that it fulfil all state necessities and obligations imposed by the new legal status on all citizens. Let the Polish population undertake the task to win the hearts of the Germans in the voivodeship for our State. After all, we are all neighbours! After all, Polish Silesia will henceforth be a common homeland for Poles and Germans! (...) This agreement between Poles and Germans in the voivodeship, honestly understood by both parties and honestly implemented, will be of great importance for our part of Upper Silesia, but also will greatly contribute to calming the minds in the other part of Upper Silesia. The better relations we have in this regard, the more advantageous our brethren will be abroad. Let us, therefore, create in us a true divine peace – treuga Dei, so that our brothers and sisters may enjoy the same peace. We are coming to you, Poland, because we believe that you will be a safe haven for all our rights, a defensive guardian of all our freedoms and a permanent fortress of the Christian social order. We are coming to you because we trust that you will be a multiplier of peace and peaceful work, because only she will be able to ensure successful development and a happy future for the state, and the desired prosperity and certainty of tomorrow to the citizens”.

In turn, on the Szopienice bridge on June 20, 1922, during the welcome of the army commanded by General Szeptycki, Fr. Kapica in a very sublime tone announced: „Today all of Poland rejoices, today Upper Silesia rejoices, because today Silesia welcomes Poland, and Poland welcomes Silesia. Welcoming you, Mr. General, on behalf of the people and the Catholic clergy, we greet Poland, our homeland. (...) We

have been separated for 700 years, but we have not yet forgotten our mother tongue, we have not forgotten the Polish prayer. Welcoming Poland, we welcome you, White Eagle! Fly high above the land of Silesia, above its cities, above its villages. You are a symbol of freedom and fame, a symbol of national ideals. We welcome you to the Polish sword! The Polish sword is a famous sword, a brave, knightly sword that has fought so many times for the faith. The Polish sword defended Christianity, and recently defended the Christian civilization from destruction. Polish sword, we welcome you! For you will not be an instrument of violence, but an instrument of law, a pledge of power and supremacy, a legitimate authority, given to us by God. Welcome, Principalities! Welcome to this hope that you will bring peace to people of good will, you will bring order and social order, security of life and property. Silesia brings its homeland generous gifts in sacrifice, because our land is rich in treasures above the earth and in the earth. But the greatest treasure of our land is not coal and iron, but the heart of the Catholic people, a heart as simple as a child's heart, yet brave, brave and constant, like the steel that a steelworker forges. (...) So go, General, go, Polish soldier - go to the land of Silesia, go in the name of God, go in the name of the law! (...) Blessed be the land of Silesia, all towns and villages, blessed be the people and all their estates, blessed worker, blessed farmer, blessed burgher! Blessed be the government of our homeland! Go, Poland, through the ages to fame and a happy future! (...) Long live Poland, long live Upper Silesia!"

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