

**POLAND**

## **No to a Wojtyła museum: Tusk's government rejects Christianity**

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When the idea arose in Poland to create a museum dedicated to the spiritual legacy of Saint John Paul II, the most famous Pole in the world and the greatest figure in Polish history, the plan was to call it the Museum of Memory and Identity (photo by Monika

Tomaszek), after the title of the book by Pope Karol Wojtyła published in 2005. The book is a reflection on the history of Poland, on the identity of Europe, which was strongly shaped by Christianity, and on the mystery of evil, embodied in the great totalitarian systems of the 20th century, such as Nazism and Communism, which Wojtyła had personally experienced.

**The museum, built in the city of Toruń,** had two co-founders: the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Lux Veritatis Foundation. Today, the buildings of the future museum have been completed and the exhibition is ready. But after the change of government, the Ministry of Culture, under the leadership of Hanna Wroblewska, is trying to destroy this great initiative, as well as many similar ones that aim to keep the memory of the Polish Pope alive. The government's purely political and ideological motives come at the cost of wasting the public money spent so far on the construction of this State museum.

**In this deplorable situation,** the Lux Veritatis Foundation, co-founder of the Museum, has issued a statement in which it announces that 'the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage has filed a lawsuit against the Lux Veritatis Foundation and the Museum in the District Court in Warsaw, in order to establish the invalidity of the contract concerning the arrangement for the cultural institution called the Museum "Memory and Identity" named after Saint John Paul II in Toruń. Even at this first stage, the lawsuit filed is based on mistruths and contains numerous errors. On 23 December 2024, the District Court in Warsaw issued an order to return the entire case to the Ministry "due to significant deficiencies in the document". Moreover, as the statement of the Lux Veritatis Foundation goes on to explain, "the lawsuit states that the contract for the use of the land on which the museum was located expired on 31 December 2022, so the museum no longer has permission to use the land". A falsehood which the Ministry knows is a deceit because 'in May 2023 it received notarial deeds extending the right to use this property for the following years'.

**It's an unequivocal indication of the determination of the Ministry of Culture,** which, under political pressure, is even prepared to present false evidence to the court. However, the Foundation stresses that, unfortunately, the return of the case will not put an end to the matter, because 'the political pressure exerted by the current government on the courts is so great that this case could turn into a real political trial' to satisfy the most radical and anti-clerical part of the electorate of the current government.

**For the Foundation,** there is no doubt what the purpose of the whole operation is, namely 'the liquidation of the Museum in which the teachings of Saint John Paul II

should be presented'. The Ministry's fight against the John Paul II Museum is part of "the negative attitude of the current government towards the Catholic Church and religion". The statement recalls that last year there was an attempt to remove crosses from public buildings, there is a desire to eliminate catechesis from schools, not to mention the daily denigration of priests in the mass media, which are completely in thrall to the anticlerical line of the Tusk government.

**The Foundation has no doubt:** the attempt to prevent the Museum of Memory and Identity from being built is part of a 'witch hunt' against John Paul II, the Museum's patron. And to do, this the current government is resorting to lies and abusing its position of power. In this situation, the Foundation once again appeals for a mature dialogue to resolve the situation in a way that takes into account the common good.

**Speaking of the John Paul II Museum,** which according to Tusk's government should not be built, another fact must be pointed out: the opening of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Warsaw, much desired by the mayor of the capital, Rafal Trzaskowski, who is also the vice-president of Tusk's Civic Platform party and a candidate in the presidential elections. The Museum of Contemporary Art cost the enormous sum of 700 million zlotys (or around 166 million euros), and for this sum a monstrous cube has been built, like a giant container or supermarket, disfiguring the centre of the Polish capital. The Trzaskowski Museum is half empty, but as many have noticed, the shelves of the gift shop are filled with publications promoting LGBT ideology and gender identity issues, including the comic strip 'Gender queer: an autobiography', with very explicit drawings, such as oral sex between two boys.

**But this is Tusk's Poland:** a country that, on the one hand, wants to condemn to damnatio memoriae its most illustrious citizen and, on the other, promotes the initiatives of the mayor of Warsaw, a typical liberal chic figure, fanatical environmentalist, supporter of the LGBT cause, opponent of the public presence of the Church, to the point of banning the display of crosses in public offices.

**In the light of these facts, the explanation given by the Ministry of Culture** and National Heritage, which wants to close the museum dedicated to Saint John Paul II for reasons of "public interest" and "transparency in the use of public funds", sounds like a mockery. As if to say: 166 million of public money for a worthless museum dear to Trzaskowski is perfectly all right, but a fraction of this sum for the museum in memory of the greatest of Poles is a waste. And this in the country where Saint John Paul II was born and bred.