

Snapshots: Earth



Earth is ground – it is where roots are put down – actually, by trees and plants, and metaphorically, by us, when we settle, and our family, generation after generation calls that place “home”. It calls us to itself; draws us – however far we stray, part of us always belongs there. If somehow that land is taken from us, we fight to regain it, we wait long years, sometimes decades, to get it back, and there is in us a longing, a desire, a need for that place – we are always connected to it. On 1st November, we placed three little phials of soil in our graveyard in Szymanów from the area around Lviv – the soil of home for many Sisters. At Sisters’ funerals, earth from Jazlowiec is sprinkled on the coffin. Why? Because for us, Jazlowiec is our spiritual home too, the earth symbolizes the link, the connection, the sense of belonging, the place where our roots are. Earth, soil, ground, sky, horizon, fields, villages, walls, towns, cities, houses, barns, trees, flowers.



Jazlowiec



10.XI.1918 – Joseph Pilsudski returns to Warsaw

On 11th November, we remember the rising of Poland from the ashes of repression and occupation – the regaining, the meeting of desire and the satisfying of a longing, the healing of a wound. So many of our Sisters didn’t live to experience that day, but they prayed for it, and believed it would come. For many years in the school library at Jazlowiec, lay a foolscap edition of a book, written by a Polish Jesuit priest, Peter Skarga (1536-1612). On 8th December 1878, twelve girls found the book, and this is what they wrote inside :

We, the students of the school in the name of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Jazlowiec, greatly envy this volume, which has seen the time when our Poland was free, and it is our desire, that, at some time, it will be in the hands of the happy generation, at the time when the fortunes of our homeland, by the grace of God will be resurrected. May that generation record then, in this book, their grateful thanks to God, as we this day record our pain, and our trust in His mercy. We write this through the intercession of the Immaculate Queen of Poland.

They signed their declaration. As the years passed, more signatures were added. After forty-one years, the final nine signatures appeared underneath a fresh entry, also on 8th December – in 1919 :

Finally we have the joy, according to the wishes of our friends of years past, to write a few words, as a witness of our unending thanks to God, in the year that our Homeland is, at last, free, that out of His goodness, He has heard the fervent prayers of generations, and has returned our beloved Homeland, which we now ask that He will always keep close to the path of virtues and truth, so that in our Poland, the words of the Lord’s Prayer would be fulfilled : Your Kingdom Come.

And You, Immaculate Mother, who have always been our Queen and Protector, we ask: do not abandon us, govern us, and allow that we would remain faithful in our lives to the principles instilled in us by the dear Sisters, through the one Mother (Marcelina), who – we fervently hope – we will shortly see in the ranks of the Holy Patrons of our country. When this happens, we ask our future friends to write that in this book, as an expression of our great thankfulness to the Highest Lord.

The book was lost many years ago, in the tumult and confusion that then surrounded Jazlowiec. The words inside have survived – not only on paper, but in the hearts and minds of all who love this earth, this land, this nation.

