

## Feast of Corpus Christi

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ is one of the most important holidays celebrated in the Catholic Church when it was announced by Pope John XXII in 1334.

In Poland, the first was introduced by bishop Nankier in the diocese of Krakow in 1320. However, in the Uniate Church - the synod of Zamość in 1720. From the time of the partitions, it was a holiday associated with nationality. It was similar after World War II, when the Corpus Christi processions were a sign of the unity of the nation and faith, despite the communist authorities.

In the early 1950s, the Polish United Political Party (PZPR) made demands to the Catholic Church. The Church was demanded to condemn US imperialism and to agree to submit appointments to church positions in line with party expectations. On May 21, 1953, the Primate of Poland, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, presented the memorial to Bolesław Bierut, and on June 4, during the Corpus Christi celebration, he presented its content to the faithful gathered in the procession. In response to the memorial, the communists decided to intern Cardinal Wyszyński in September 1953. It is "non possumus" that has become a symbol of opposition. Those bishops who did not want to submit to communist rule were removed from office or imprisoned.

The critical moment came in September 1953, when Wyszyński was interned. The bishops were offered an offer either to swear an oath of allegiance to People's Poland or you will share the fate of Wyszyński. It must be made clear that the part of the bishops who remained at large broke and swore allegiance to the constitution of the Polish People's Republic (said Professor Antoni Dudek in the broadcast of *Polish Radio* - 2019).

This year, due to the epidemic in many dioceses, traditional processions were not held along the streets of individual towns, but modest ones, around churches. However, in some dioceses, bishops have decided to organize a main procession through the streets of the city. "The beautiful weather and the loosening of many restrictions meant that record crowds of people appeared at the processions". Some of the priests emphasized that they had not seen so many people for years.

(Link- *Corpus Christi 2021. Record crowds of people at processions.* <https://echodnia.eu>)

In Sydney, at the church in Marayong, Corpus Christi celebrations were held on Sunday, Ela Stępień wrote on this occasion:

"We are grateful that, although far from our homeland, we have our own place where we can gather and, just like today, go in colourful procession and pay the tribute to Jesus Christ".

According to Ela Lewandowska, after the mass there were also performances of Polish folk groups, involved in the fundraising for the Pol-Art Festival.

Below are some photos from the Corpus Christi processions celebrated in pre-war Poland posted on the Corpus Christi in old Poland website. *Processions before the war:* <https://wiadomości.pl>

### Sources:

*Corpus Christi in old Poland. Processions before the war.* <https://wiadomości.pl>

*The interference of the communist authorities in the organization of the Corpus Christi procession.* <http://www.polska1918-89.pl>

*"Non possumus" and opposition to interference by communists.* <http://www.polskieradio.pl>

(Translated by: Danuta Piotrowska)