



A GLIMPSE INTO THE THOUGHTS OF BLESSED JOHN PAUL II

Editor Agnieszka Rudziewicz Speaks on Upcoming Publication of Pontiff's Personal Notes

By Milena Kindziuk

ROME, January 22, 2014 (Zenit.org) - A new book entitled, "I Am In God's Hands" is set to be released in Poland that will publish the private notes of Blessed John Paul II. Some have opposed its publication due to John Paul II's wish in his final will that all his personal notes be burned. Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz, the late Holy Father's personal secretary, however, stated that *the notes are of historical importance*.

"I didn't burn John Paul II's notes because they are the key to interpreting his spirituality, his innermost self: his relationships with God, others and himself," Cardinal Dziwisz told Polish News Agency, KAI.

Agnieszka Rudziewicz, one of the editors of the upcoming publication, spoke with Milena Kindziuk of the Polish publication Niedzela, on the impact of John Paul II's notes.

* * *

Q. What was your reaction when you found out that you would read and edit the texts of [Blessed] John Paul II?

Rudziewicz: I was terrified!

Q. Why?

Rudziewicz: Because nobody gives manuscripts for publishing any more. So, from the very beginning this work had a different character than usual. We were dealing with a text which, first of all, required reading, then rewriting and later careful editorial work.

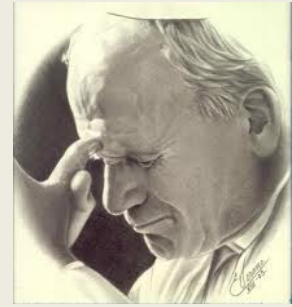
From the beginning only a few people had been involved in the editorial work. When we found out that we would be working on these texts, we were proud because publication of these texts was an unusual event. Besides, we were aware that we were one of the first readers of the notes! It was touching. However, when we saw what the texts looked like, on which we were going to work (we received scans of the notes), we were simply terrified.

Q. Did you agree straight away?

Rudziewicz: We did not have any doubts that we were *participating in a historical event*. And probably none of us hesitated any moment, although we knew from the very beginning that we would have to devote a few months to this book. And, please, *believe me - everything was indeed dedicated to this work*.

Q. Was it easy to read the handwritten notes of the Pope? Were they legible?

Rudziewicz: Because the notes comprise over 40 years of life of John Paul II - they were finished two years before his death - it is seen, how the handwriting character of the Pope was changing. In the 60s, it was strong, very clear and definite. Karol Wojtyła used nearly every smallest fragment of a sheet of paper - *every page is even dense in words, which are written in very tiny letters, as if he did not want to waste a single line*. Later, as years passed, his handwriting style became less legible, there are less and less complete sentences. The Holy Father often noted down very *single phrases, key thoughts*. The last page of the notes are nearly a few words, written with difficulty. When one looks at the last notes, the ones written in 2003, it is seen how important it was for him to keep them. He was not strong enough for it, and so he did try to write at least one word, a fragment of a sentence.....It is very touching.



Q. The texts were prepared for half a year. How were they changed?

Rudziewicz: The texts were not changed by us. First of all, we must remember that these notes are *thought abbreviations, key words, the most important sentences, matters for reflection*. We assumed a rule that, in order to be faithful to the texts which had been written, we added only the sentences written by the Author and which were translated in foreign languages - mainly in Latin and Italian, distinguishing them by color. We were also trying to solve the [problem of] abbreviations, if they were evident. On the one hand, we wanted to make it easy for readers to read the notes, and on the other hand - present the texts in such a form in which they had been written.

Q. Which sentences remain in your memory the most?

Rudziewicz: I remember the sentences written by John Paul II just after the Conclave in 1978. But I encourage everyone to read the notes - each of us, the people working on this text, found sentences that touched us personally. The whole text is great retreats. We were feeling so, while working on the notes - they were on [personal] retreats.

Q. What papal thoughts made the greatest impression on you? What side of Blessed John Paul II emerges from these notes?

Rudziewicz: I believe readers will be greatly impressed by his questions. Karol Wojtyła, and later *John Paul II, asks himself questions all the time. The most important, key questions*. He asks about who he is as a person. He thinks about whether he is mature enough [to receive] God's gifts; if his life a real answer to God's love?

We, looking at his pontificate do not have doubts, and yet he was asking himself these questions all the time. In reading these notes, I did not have any doubts that somehow *I was touching holiness*. [Blessed John Paul II] also *used to note down his schedule of every day*. I can assure you that when readers analyze how many activities, prayers, conferences, meditations are within twenty four hours, they will come to the same conclusion, to which

we came ourselves - a papal day and night included more than twenty four hours! *A very hard-working person emerges from these notes. He was a man who did not waste a single moment.*