



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO POLAND (MAY 31-JUNE 10, 1997)
ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II

Shrine of Divine Mercy

Krakow — 7 June 1997

1. "*Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo* (Ps 89:1)

Here I have come to this shrine as a pilgrim to take part in the unending hymn in honour of Divine Mercy. The Psalmist of the Lord had intoned it, expressing what every generation preserved and will continue to preserve as a most precious fruit of faith. There is nothing that man needs more than Divine Mercy — that love which is benevolent, which is compassionate, which raises man above his weakness to the infinite heights of the holiness of God. In this place we become particularly aware of this. From here, in fact, went out the Message of Divine Mercy that Christ himself chose to pass on to our generation through Blessed Faustina. And it is a message that is clear and understandable for everyone. Anyone can come here, look at this picture of the Merciful Jesus, his Heart radiating grace, and hear in the depths of his own soul what Blessed Faustina heard: "Fear nothing. I am with you always" (*Diary*, q. II). And if this person responds with a sincere heart: "Jesus, I trust in you!", he will find comfort in all his anxieties and fears. In this dialogue of abandonment, there is established between man and Christ a special bond that sets love free. And "there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear" (1 Jn 4:18).

The Church re-reads the Message of Mercy in order to bring with greater effectiveness to this generation at the end of the Millennium and to future generations the light of hope. Unceasingly the Church implores from God mercy for everyone. "At no time and in no historical period — especially at a moment as critical as our own — can the Church forget the prayer that is a cry for the mercy of God amid the many forms of evil which weigh upon humanity and threaten it . . . The more the human conscience succumbs to secularization, loses its sense of the very meaning of the word 'mercy', moves away from God and distances itself from the mystery of mercy, the more the Church has the right and the duty to appeal to the God of mercy 'with loud cries'" (*Dives in Misericordia*, 15). Precisely for this reason this shrine too has found a place on my pilgrim

itinerary. I come here to commend the concerns of the Church and of humanity to the merciful Christ. On the threshold of the Third Millennium I come to entrust to him once more my Petrine ministry — "Jesus, I trust in you"!

The Message of Divine Mercy has always been near and dear to me. It is as if history had inscribed it in the tragic experience of the Second World War. In those difficult years it was a particular support and an inexhaustible source of hope, not only for the people of Krakow but for the entire nation. This was also my personal experience, which I took with me to the See of Peter and which in a sense forms the image of this Pontificate. I give thanks to Divine Providence that I have been enabled to contribute personally to the fulfilment of Christ's will, through the institution of the Feast of Divine Mercy. Here, near the relics of Blessed Faustina Kowalska, I give thanks also for the gift of her beatification. I pray unceasingly that God will have "mercy on us and the whole world" (*Chaplet*).

2. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Mt 5:7).

Dear Sisters! An extraordinary vocation is yours. Choosing from among you Blessed Faustina, Christ has made your Congregation the guardian of this place, and at the same time he has called you to a particular apostolate, that of his Mercy. I ask you: accept this responsibility! The people of today need your proclamation of mercy: they need your works of mercy and they need your prayer to obtain mercy. Do not neglect any of these dimensions of the apostolate. Fulfil it in union with the Archbishop of Krakow, to whose heart is so dear the devotion to the Divine Mercy, and in union with the whole ecclesial community over which he presides. May this shared work bear much fruit! May the Divine Mercy transform people's hearts! May this Shrine, known already in many parts of the world, become a centre of worship of the Divine Mercy which shines on the whole Church!

Once more I ask you to pray for the intentions of the Church and to support me in my ministry as Successor of Peter. I know that such prayer is always offered here: I thank you for this with all my heart. We all need it so much: *Tertio millennio adveniente*.

I cordially bless all who are present here and all those devoted to the Divine Mercy.