



# Divine Mercy in my Soul

**Divine Mercy  
Spirituality**

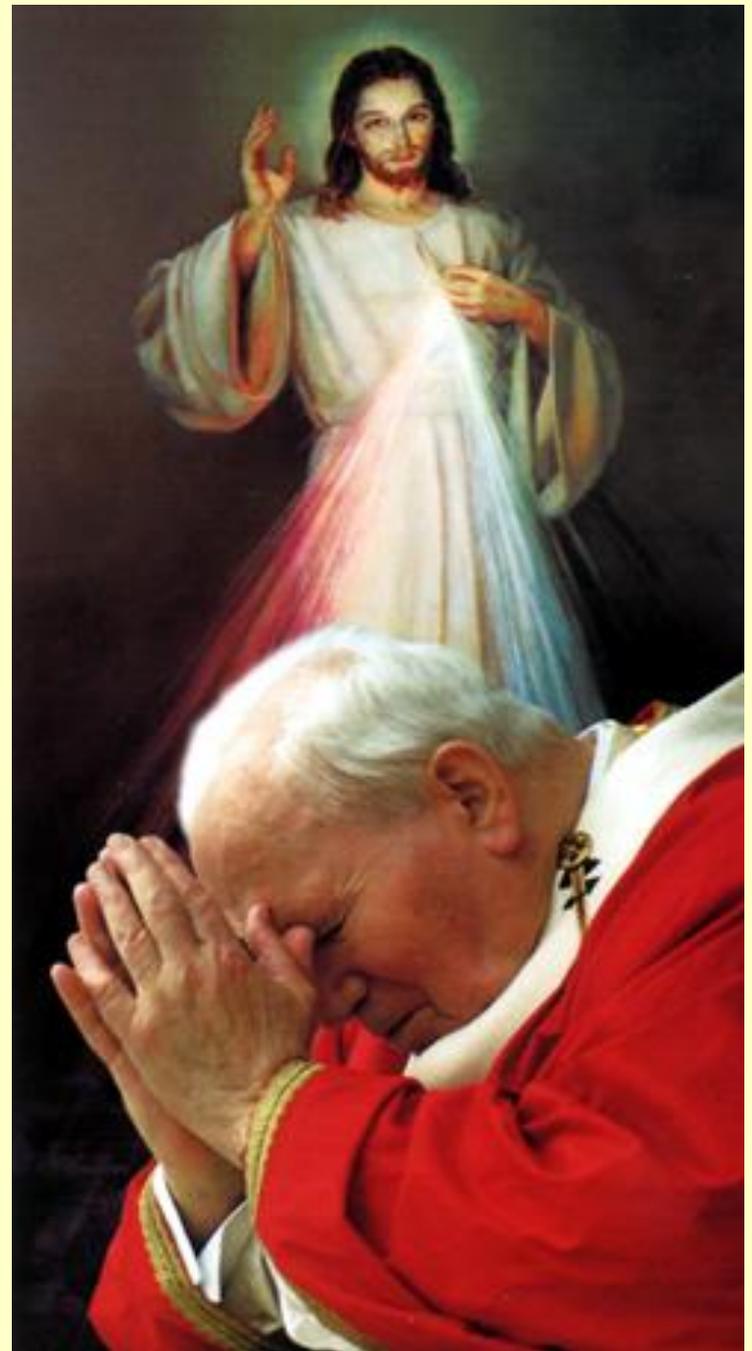
Presentation compiled by  
Fr. George J. Bobowski, Ph.D.



Many priests, religious communities and lay persons who put the spirit of the devotion to the Divine Mercy into practice in their lives, thereby sharing in this great community of worshippers and apostles of the Divine Mercy. May the number of people involved in this work be as large as possible, since there is nothing that the world today needs more than living witnesses of the goodness of God, and hands joined in prayer for His mercy.

Jesus told Sister Faustina - "**mankind will not have peace until it turns with trust to My mercy**" (*Diary 300*).

**The Concept of  
Spirituality  
and  
Divine Mercy's  
Way of Life**





***As we begin to study the fundamental characteristics of Sister Faustina's spirituality, we must first specify the concept of spirituality itself.***

***The definition found in the dictionary states that:***

- spirituality is the systematic and prudent practice of being prayerfully, piously true to the rules of Christian life.

***Simply speaking:***

- spirituality encompasses everything that relates to the practice of religion, that reality in which man meets with God.



The description of Christian spirituality takes all the elements of the interior life into consideration.

**This includes:**

- **prayer,**
- **asceticism,**
- **the experience of the mysteries of the faith,**
- **the liturgy,**
- **the ways of imitating Christ,**
- **as well as social background and, nowadays, various psychological conditions.**

In our study of Sister Faustina's spirituality, we will focus primarily on its fundamental characteristics:

- **I - Coming to know the mystery of Divine Mercy and contemplating it in everyday life,**
- **II - Perfecting one's attitude of trust in God and mercy toward neighbor,**
- **III - Having love for the Church and concern for the salvation of lost souls,**
- **IV - A deep sacramental life,**
- **V - And devotion to Our Lady.**

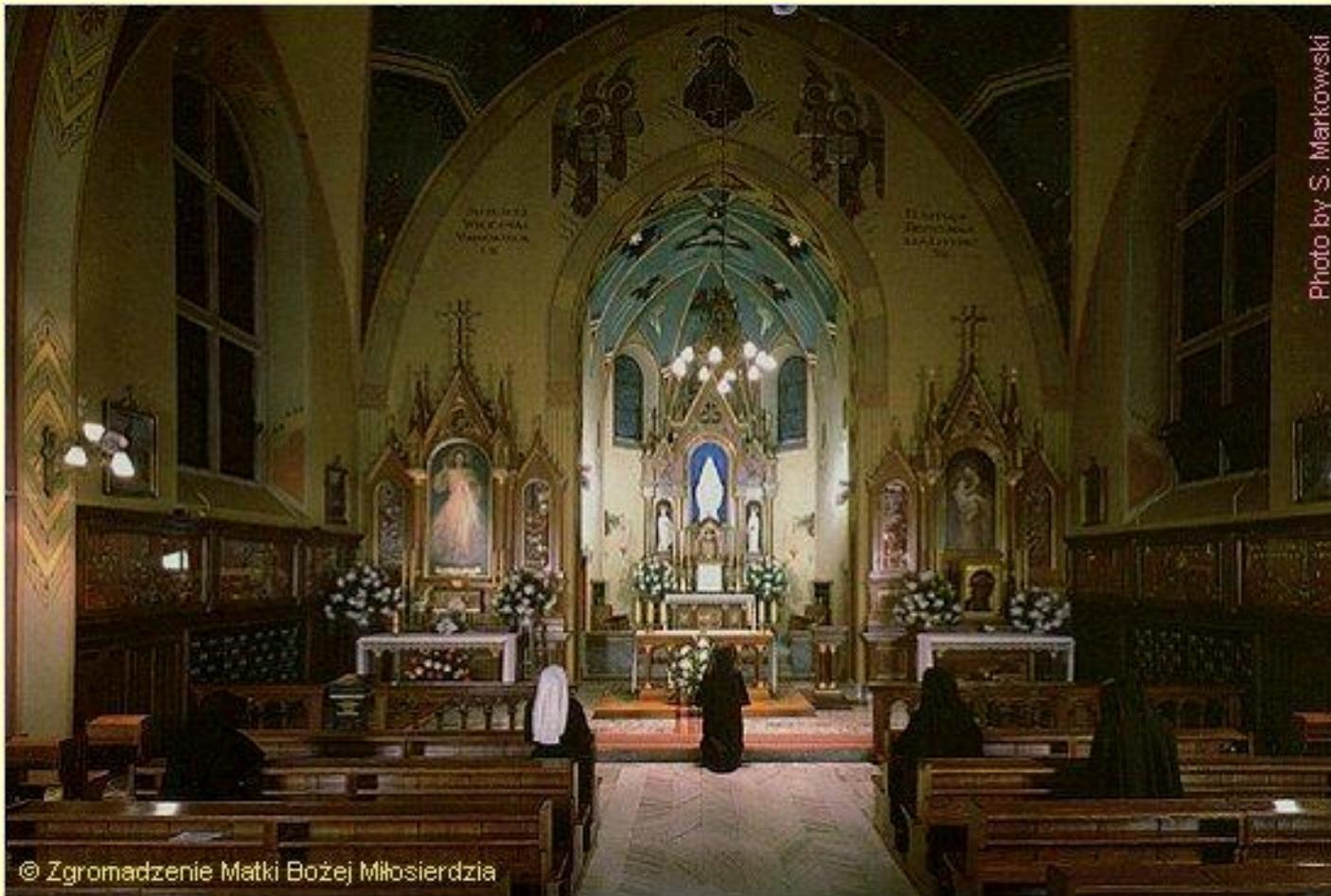


Photo by S. Markowski

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# I. THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MYSTERY OF DIVINE MERCY AND ITS CONTEMPLATION IN EVERYDAY LIFE



It is natural for man to have the desire to come to know God, because he was created in His image and likeness (cf. Gn 1:26). God fulfills this desire of the human heart, for as St. Paul writes: ***Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made*** (Rom 1:20). Such knowledge of God based on His visible works - is accessible to every person by the use of reason.

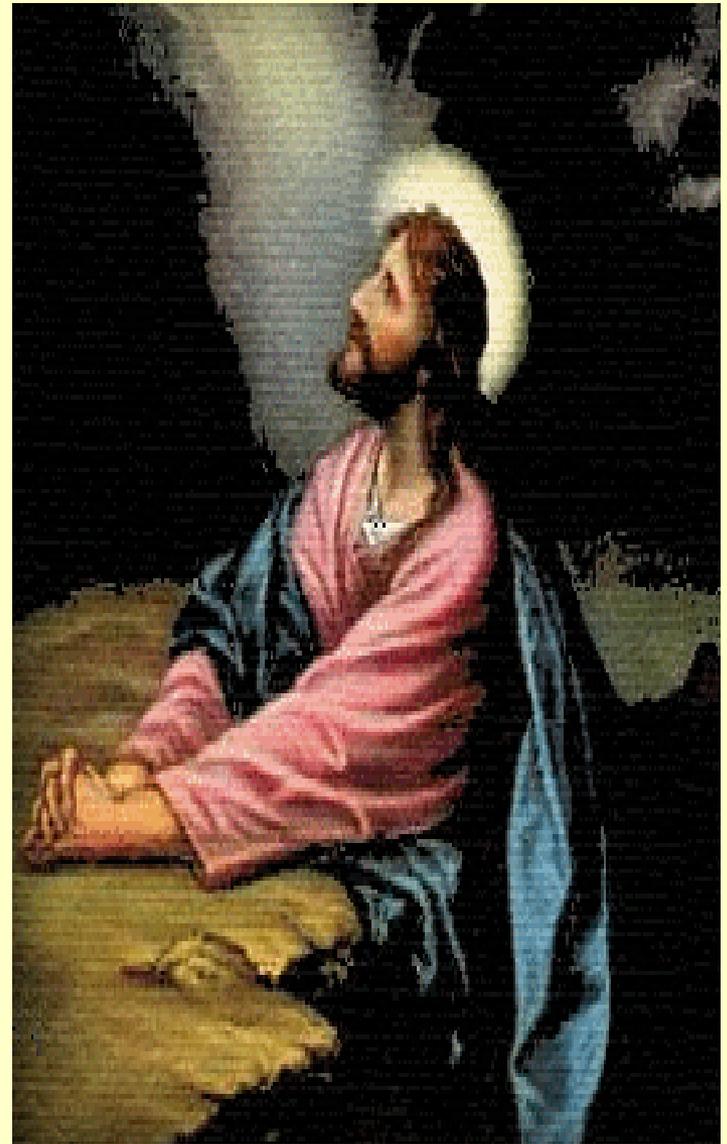


**Who is God?** Sister Faustina asked herself this question more than once. She wrote in her Diary:

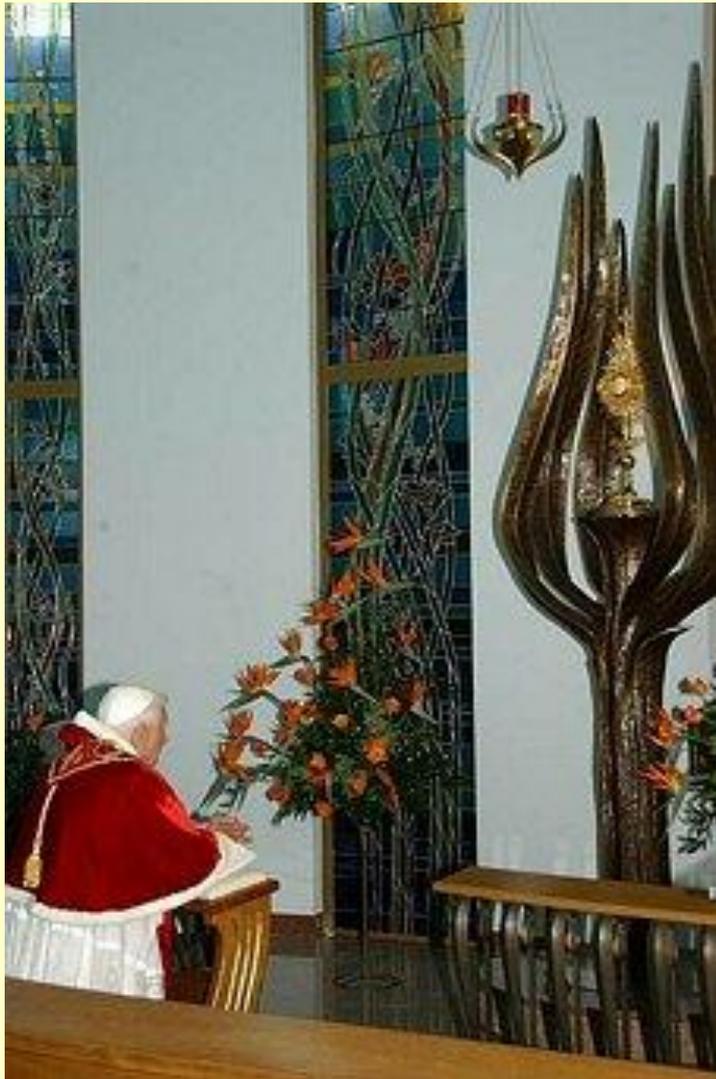
***“...from this sea of inaccessible light came our dearly beloved Savior, unutterably beautiful with His shining Wounds. And from this light came a voice which said, Who God is in His Essence, no one will fathom, neither the mind of Angels nor of man. Jesus said to me, get to know GOD BY CONTEMPLATING HIS ATTRIBUTES (Diary 30).*”**

***And I understood*** – Saint Faustina wrote -***that the greatest attribute is love and mercy. It unites the creature with the Creator.***

***This immense love and abyss of mercy are made known in the Incarnation of the Word and in the Redemption [of humanity], and it is here that I saw this as the greatest of all God's attributes*** (Diary 180).



# A. The Knowledge of the Mystery of Divine Mercy



Man is able to come to know this mystery of our faith - like any other - by the gift of the Holy Spirit given in Baptism, which is the supernatural virtue of faith.

## **B. Contemplation of the Mystery of Divine Mercy in Daily Life**



**The desire in Sister Faustina's soul to reflect this attribute of God in her own heart and deed resulted from the systematic meditation upon the mystery of Divine Mercy.**

**This demanded that she constantly work on herself, develop the attitude of continuous conversion, and strive for Christian perfection. Such a disposition of soul leads to the state of contemplation of God.**

**The desire in a soul to reflect God's Mercy**



**Meditation**



**Constantly work on our self**



**Develop the attitude of continuous conversion**

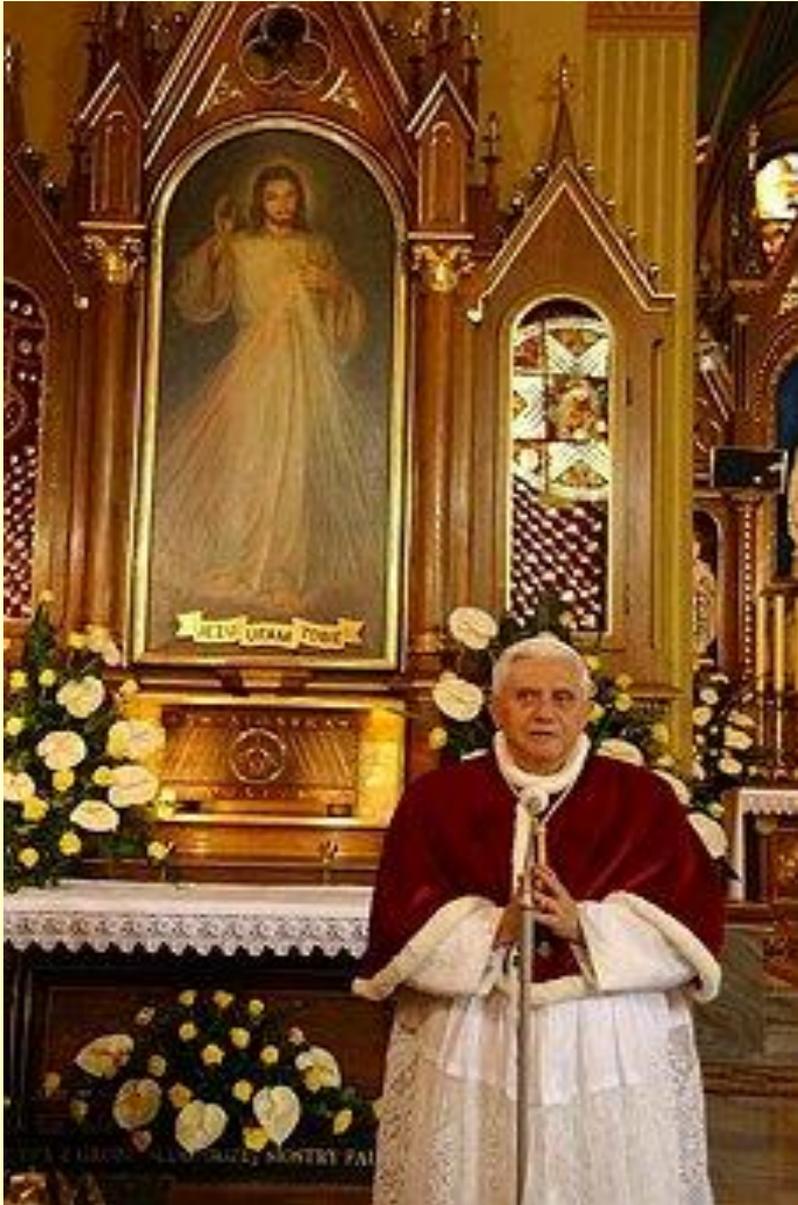


**Strive for Christian perfection**



**The state of **Contemplation** of God**

*Contemplation in the spiritual life means that a person stays very peacefully in the presence of God.*



## II. THE ATTITUDE OF TRUST AND MERCY

In guiding Sister Faustina's interior life, the Lord Jesus demanded precisely these two attitudes from her.

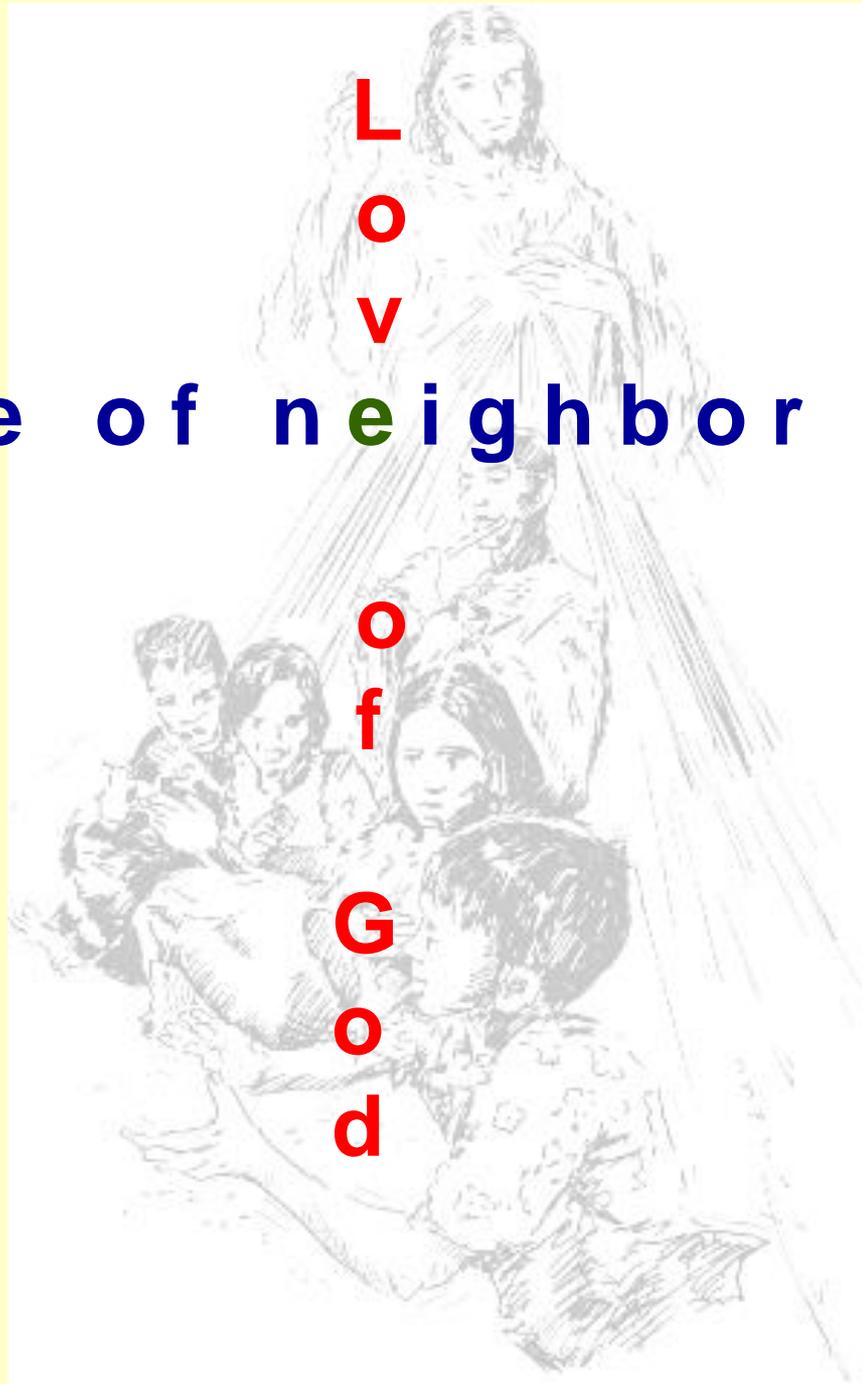
1. ***My daughter - He said - if I demand through you that people revere My mercy, you should be the first to distinguish yourself by this confidence in My mercy.***
2. ***I demand from you deeds of mercy, which are to arise out of love for Me. You are to show mercy to your neighbors always and everywhere. You must not shrink from this or try to excuse or absolve yourself from it (Diary 742).***



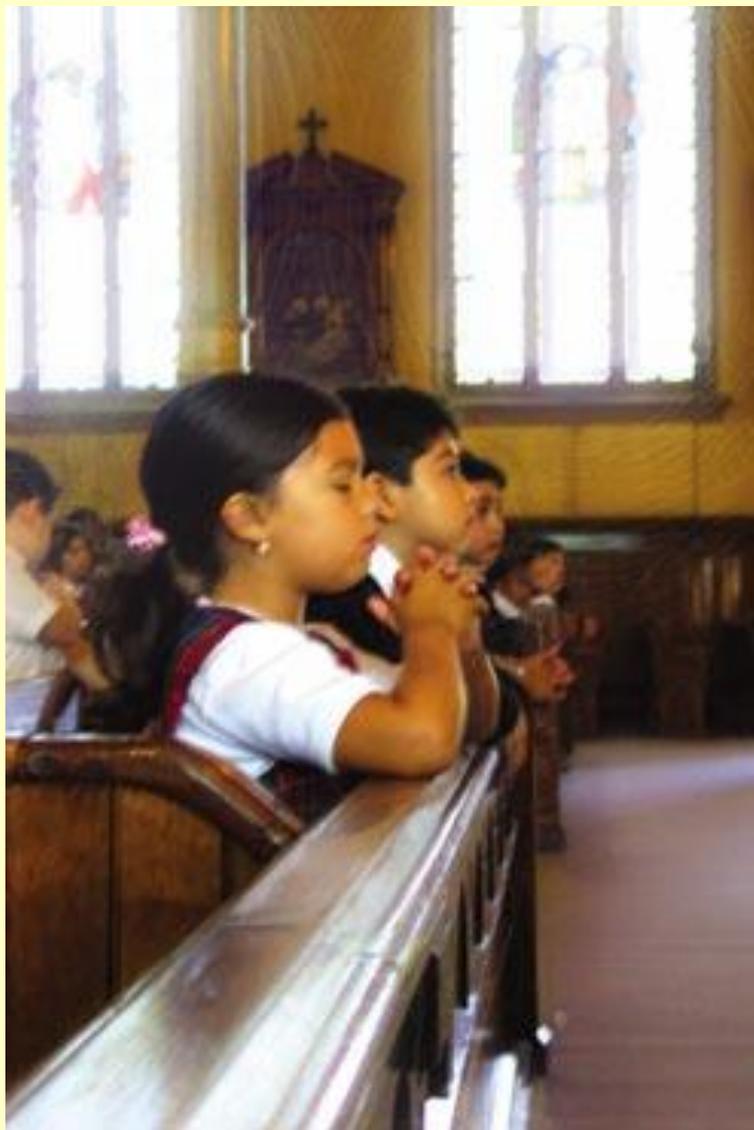
The characteristic traits of the spirituality, formulated in this way and presented as the fundamental attitude of man in a vertical dimension  
**Love of God**  
and a horizontal dimension  
**Love of Neighbor**  
take deep roots in the devotion to the Divine Mercy, whose essence in fact is trust in God and active love of neighbor.

**L**  
**o**  
**v**  
**L o v e o f n e i g h b o r**

**o**  
**f**  
**G**  
**o**  
**d**



## A. The Attitude of Trust



In everyday language the words:  
*I trust* mean as much as:

- I fully believe the other person,
- I entrust my life to him - my present and my future;
- I know that I can count on this person;
- I am sure of his disinterested love and help in the event I might need it.

Such an understanding of trust is close to the biblical concept of faith, or entrustment, which is man's response to God's gift: the revelation of His merciful love. Likewise, we find this concept of trust in Sister Faustina's writings.



To trust in somebody means to be so convinced of somebody's goodness, loyalty, help, and greatness of soul that we reveal to him without fear or anxiety the most intimate things; that we share our secret pains; that we lay bare the whole truth; simply speaking, that we commit ourselves to his care.



Such an understanding of trust is close to the biblical concept of faith, or entrustment, which is man's response to God's gift: the revelation of His merciful love.

Likewise, we find this concept of trust in Sister Faustina's writings.

The word trust refers not only to relations between people, but above all to the relationship between God and man.

**God first trusted in man;**

**He expects the same attitude from him.**

In sister Faustina's life, **trust is** precisely a **total surrender to God** that is full of childlike intimacy.



**Knowledge of the mystery of Divine Mercy is the principal motive of trust.**

**I know the full power of Your mercy, and I trust that You will give me everything** (*Diary 898*).

**Without this knowledge of God in His mercy, trust would be deprived of its foundation and would hang in emptiness.**

Between faith and trust there exists  
a proportional relationship:

**the greater the faith ↔ the greater the trust in God**

1. By faith we recognize that  
God is Love and Mercy.
2. Deep knowledge of God's Mercy  
gives birth to trust;
3. Trust is abandonment or complete  
surrender to God

# SINS AGAINST TRUST

Moral theology speaks about sins against hope, among which number:

- despair,
- presumption,
- and spiritual sloth, that is to say, discouragement.

In the Diary, sins against trust are generally described as:

- distrust,
- disbelief,
- discouragement,
- and despair.

Trust in Sister Faustina's context is an attitude consisting of the theological virtues:

- faith,
- hope,
- love

and moral virtues:

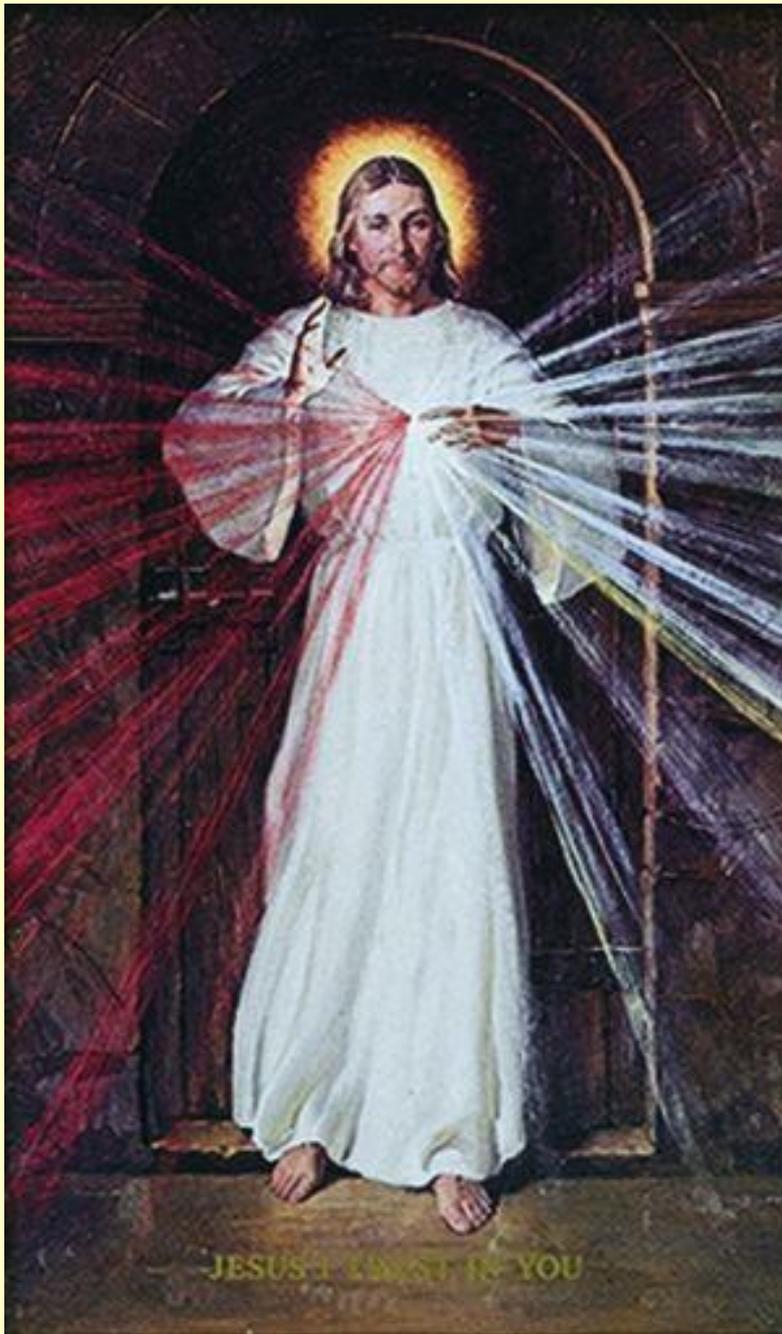
- humility
- and contrition

therefore, sins against these virtues, which constitute this attitude, are at the same time transgressions against trust. To these also belong, in addition to the ones already mentioned: doubt, hatred of God, pride, as well as lack of contrition, penance, and conversion. The root of all sins against trust is the failure to come to know the mystery of Divine Mercy.

Therefore, sins against these virtues, which constitute this attitude, are at the same time transgressions against trust. To these also belong, in addition to the ones already mentioned:

- doubt,
- hatred of God, -
- pride,
- as well as lack of contrition,  
penance, and conversion.

The root of all sins against trust is the failure to come to know the mystery of Divine Mercy.



## B. Mercy

- Coming to know the merciful love of God, penetrating it ever more deeply, as well as experiencing it led Sister Faustina to the attitude of childlike trust toward God.
- Furthermore, it awakened the ardent desire to reflect this attribute of God in her own heart and deeds.

***Each of Your saints - she prayed - reflects one of Your virtues; I desire to reflect Your compassionate heart, full of mercy; I want to glorify it. Let Your mercy, o Jesus, be impressed upon my heart and soul like a seal and this will be my badge in this and the future life (Diary 1242).***



## **The Concept of Mercy in Theology**

In colloquial language we use a number of synonymous terms and expressions to refer to the concept of mercy.

Among them, we find expressions such as:

**tenderness,  
gentleness, goodness,  
pity, clemency, benevolence,  
love of neighbor,  
compassion and kindness.**



**Mercy, is a moral attitude towards another person,** particularly towards someone who is in special spiritual or material need. It flows from the conviction that **if man experiences mercy from God, he should also show mercy toward his neighbors.**



A new element in the understanding of Christian mercy is the Pope's statement that:

**A vital feature of the attitude of mercy is the equal level between the person who practices mercy and the one who receives mercy.**

**According to John Paul II, the benefactor is at the same time the recipient of mercy.**



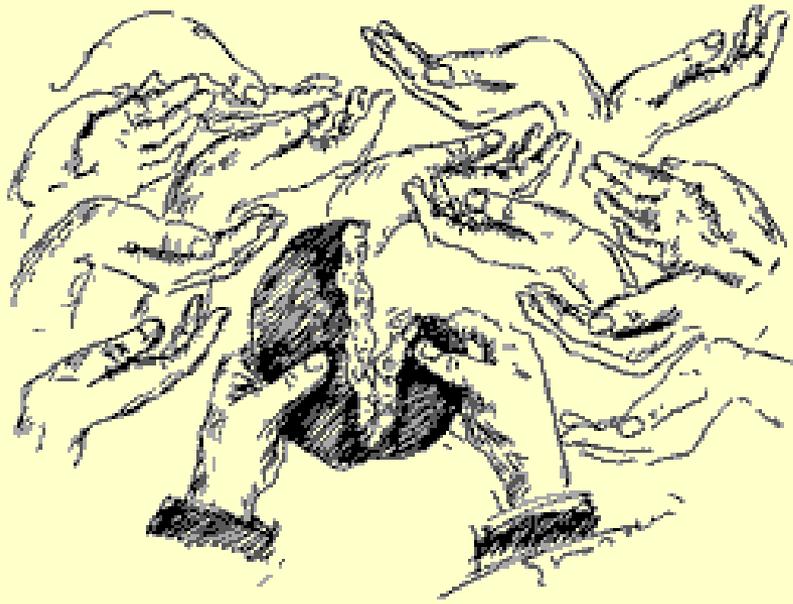
Stepping outside the widespread opinions about mercy, as an act of the giver, the Pope emphasizes that in reciprocal relationships between persons, merciful love is never a unilateral act or process.

**Even in the cases in which everything would seem to indicate that only one party is giving and offering, and the other only receiving and taking (...) in reality the one who gives is always also a beneficiary (DM 14).**



Every act of human mercy has its origin in God and flows from Him, for only He is good: No one is good but God alone, says the Lord Jesus to the rich official (Lk 18:19).

**The acts of God, taking pity on human weakness,** are revealed in the history of salvation, and particularly in the merciful actions and lifestyle of Jesus. Culminating in the Lord's passion on the cross and resurrection, they **are a model to all Christians.**



The condition that acts of mercy must be practiced, means that the devotion to the Divine Mercy as transmitted to us from Jesus through Sister Faustina cannot be merely a pious custom, but a "deeply experienced form of the Christian spiritual life"

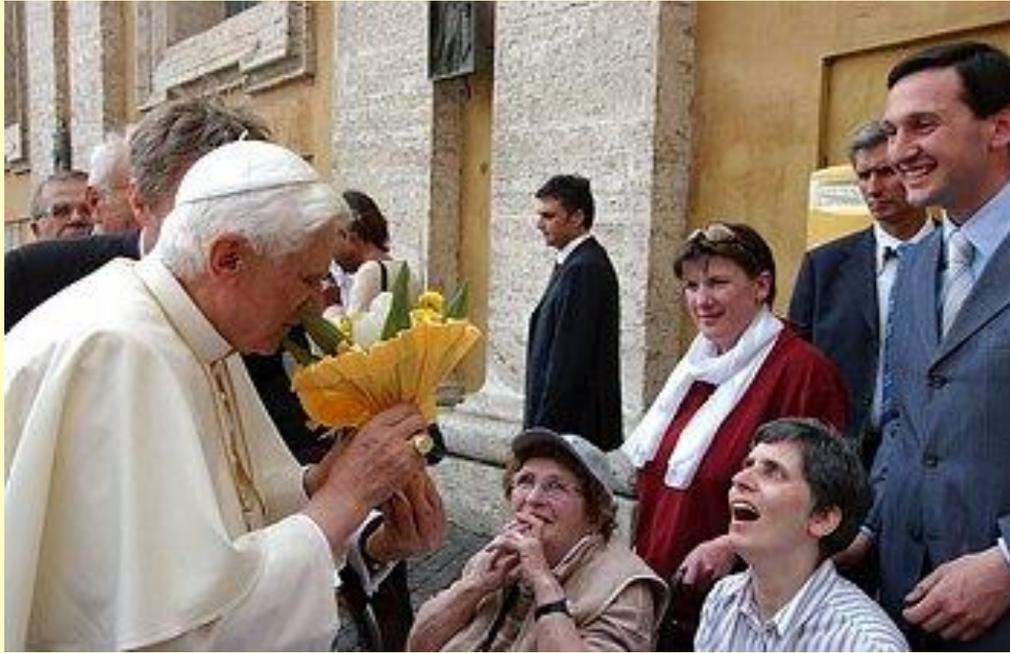
Such an attitude requires:

- the right convictions,
- the proper disposition of will
- as well as the involvement of the affective sphere of the person.

Everybody can and should indeed strive after this attitude even though not everyone will be able to practice external deeds of mercy. Mercy, being lifestyle, that is, a moral attitude of the Christian, consists of three fundamental elements:



1. An ability to take a profound, heartfelt interest in the suffering of another person. Mercy goes and meets the helpless; it intuitively senses another person's problems, embitterment and disappointment.



2. A readiness to share the lot of the suffering, to accept the entire misery of human suffering, to carry all the infirmities of a fellow human being: his failures, his sickness, his exhaustion, his uncertainty, his feeling of abandonment and of being lost.

**A merciful person takes a vital interest in the plight of another human being to the point of making it an existential situation of his life.**

### 3. The will to persevere with and stand by the side of the suffering.



A new element in the understanding of Christian mercy is the Pope's statement that a vital feature of the attitude of mercy is the equal level between the person who practices mercy and the one who receives mercy

the person who practices mercy = the one who receives mercy



- For **mercy is** not only an emotional flow of sympathy and compassion, but also **a total involvement of the mind and will expressing itself in deeds.** It is not only a momentary surge of emotion, but a permanent disposition which is characterized by faithfulness.

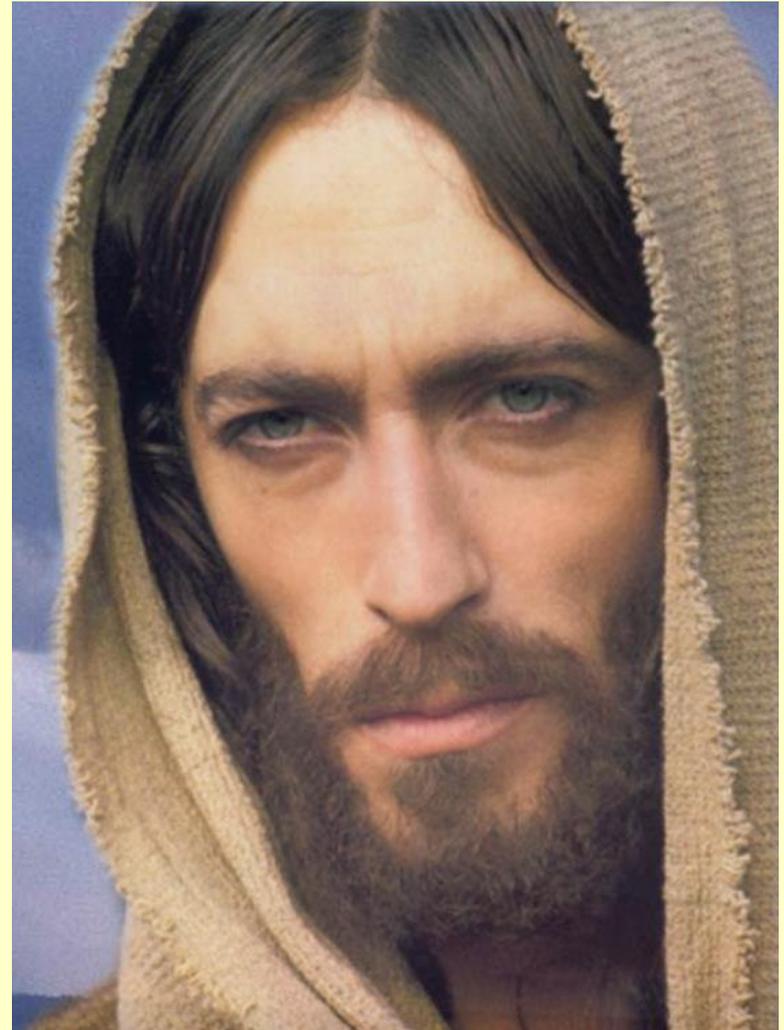
- **Mercy** appears most frequently in the context of human misery and unhappiness; it **is expressed by deep compassion and heartfelt sympathy which give rise to deeds of support and aid.**

**And these are a concrete expression of love.**

Christ receives the mercy we show to our neighbor as mercy shown to Him.

When I look at another person - I look at Jesus; when I smile at him - I smile at Jesus; when I say something good to someone, I say it to Jesus.

And on the other hand, when I am indifferent to my neighbor, pass him by or harm him, I do it to Jesus.





# The Concept of Mercy in the Writings of Sister Faustina

The attitude of mercy is the fundamental feature of the spirituality of Saint Sister Faustina. The Lord Jesus summoned Sister Faustina in numerous lessons and exhortations to assume this attitude, reminding her of this basic Christian duty which is so forcefully expressed in the Sermon on the Mount: **Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy** (Mt 5:7).

In Jesus conversations with Sister Faustina,  
**Christ pointed to Himself**

**as the model of mercy:**

**Be always merciful as I am merciful** (*Diary 1695*)

and at the same time,  
**He pointed to Himself**

**as the motive of merciful deeds:**

**Love everyone out of love for Me - He said to her - so that My mercy may be fully reflected in your heart** (*Diary 1695*).

# Divine Mercy as a Model for Human Mercy



- 1. He who does not know that God is infinite Mercy does not really know God.**
- 2. He who has not come to know and experienced that God is Mercy cannot himself be merciful.**
- 3. Man becomes merciful only in so far as he comes to know how merciful God is.**

Out of all the perfections of God, Sister Faustina was most impressed with His mercy.

**O incomprehensible God,  
my heart dissolves in joy that You have  
allowed me to penetrate the mysteries  
of Your mercy! Everything begins with  
Your mercy and ends with Your mercy**  
*(Diary 1506).*

**All grace flows from mercy, and the last  
hour abounds with mercy for us**  
*(Diary 1507).*

**By referring to mercy as an incomprehensible mystery Sister Faustina wrote:**



**Mercy is the flower  
of love.**

**God is love,  
and  
mercy is His deed.**

**In love  
it is conceived,  
in mercy**

**it is revealed**

*(Diary 651)*



In His  
conversations with  
Sister Faustina,  
the Lord Jesus  
pointed out  
**three ways**  
**of exercising mercy**  
by  
**deed, word**  
**and prayer,**  
emphasizing that in  
these three is  
contained the  
fullness of mercy  
and that,  
**at the same time,**  
**they constitute an**  
**unquestionable**  
**proof of one's love**  
for Him.

**I am giving you three ways of exercising mercy toward your neighbor:**



**the first - by deed,  
the second - by word,  
the third - by prayer.**

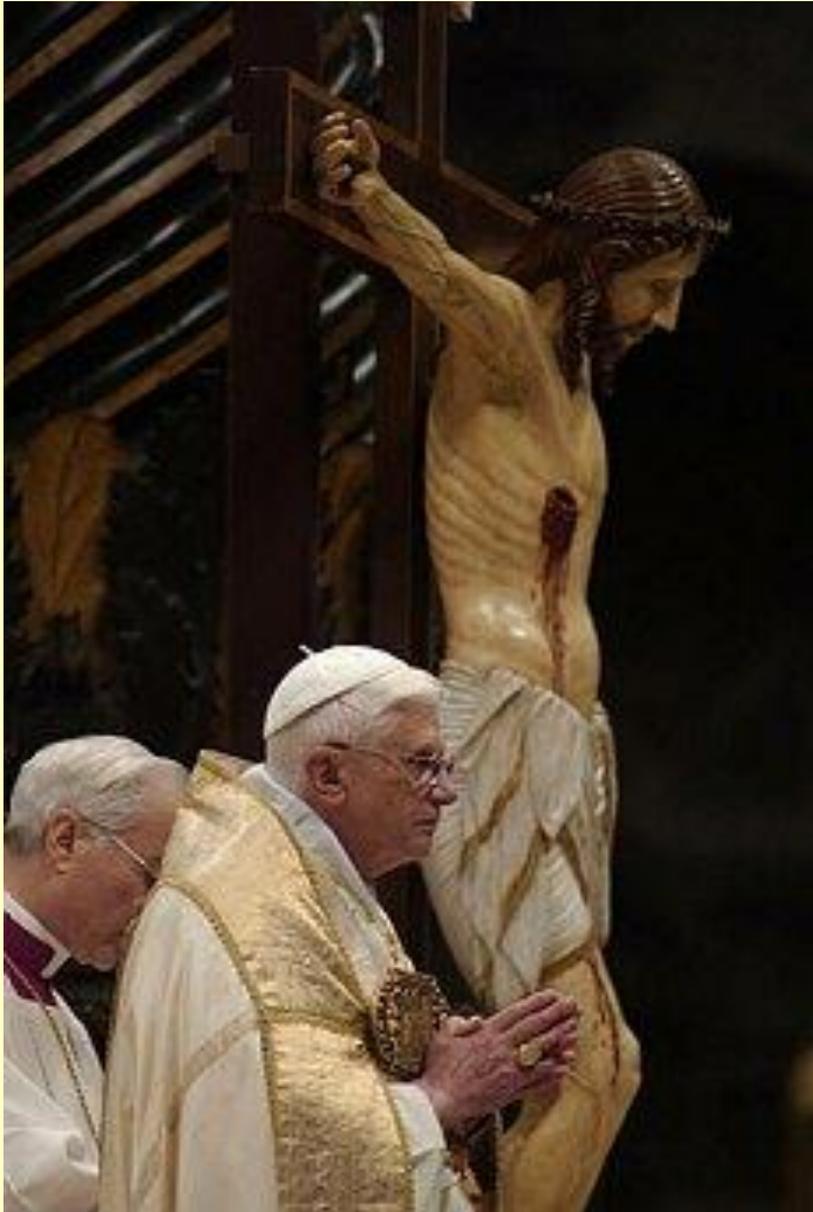
**In these three degrees is contained  
the fullness of mercy,  
and it is an unquestionable proof  
of love for Me (*Diary 742*).**

# III. LOVE FOR THE CHURCH AND THE CHARISM OF SHEDDING LIGHT ON THE MYSTERY OF DIVINE MERCY



*Sister Faustina calls the Church, born on the cross from Jesus' pierced side and symbolized by the Blood and Water flowing from the Heart of the Savior, the work of God's mercy (Diary 949).*

Since the graces of salvation and sanctification have been deposited in the Church, she is a well-spring of divine life for every Christian.



The Church of Christ, which we profess in the Creed of our faith, is one, holy, catholic and apostolic. These characteristics, inseparably linked with each other, indicate essential features of the Church and her mission (CCC 811). While Sister Faustina pondered all four characteristics, she took delight in reflecting on the attribute of holiness:

***The holiness of God*** - she wrote in her Diary - ***is poured out upon the Church of God and upon every living soul in it, but not in the same degree.***

***There are souls who are completely penetrated by God, and there are those who are barely alive*** (Diary 180).

## A. The Church - As Mother



Throughout the Church's history, many symbols have been used to express her mystery. The Church is, for example, a sheepfold, a cultivated field, the building of God, the spouse, the heavenly Jerusalem, and Mother (CCC 754-757).

## B. The Church - As the Mystical Body of Christ

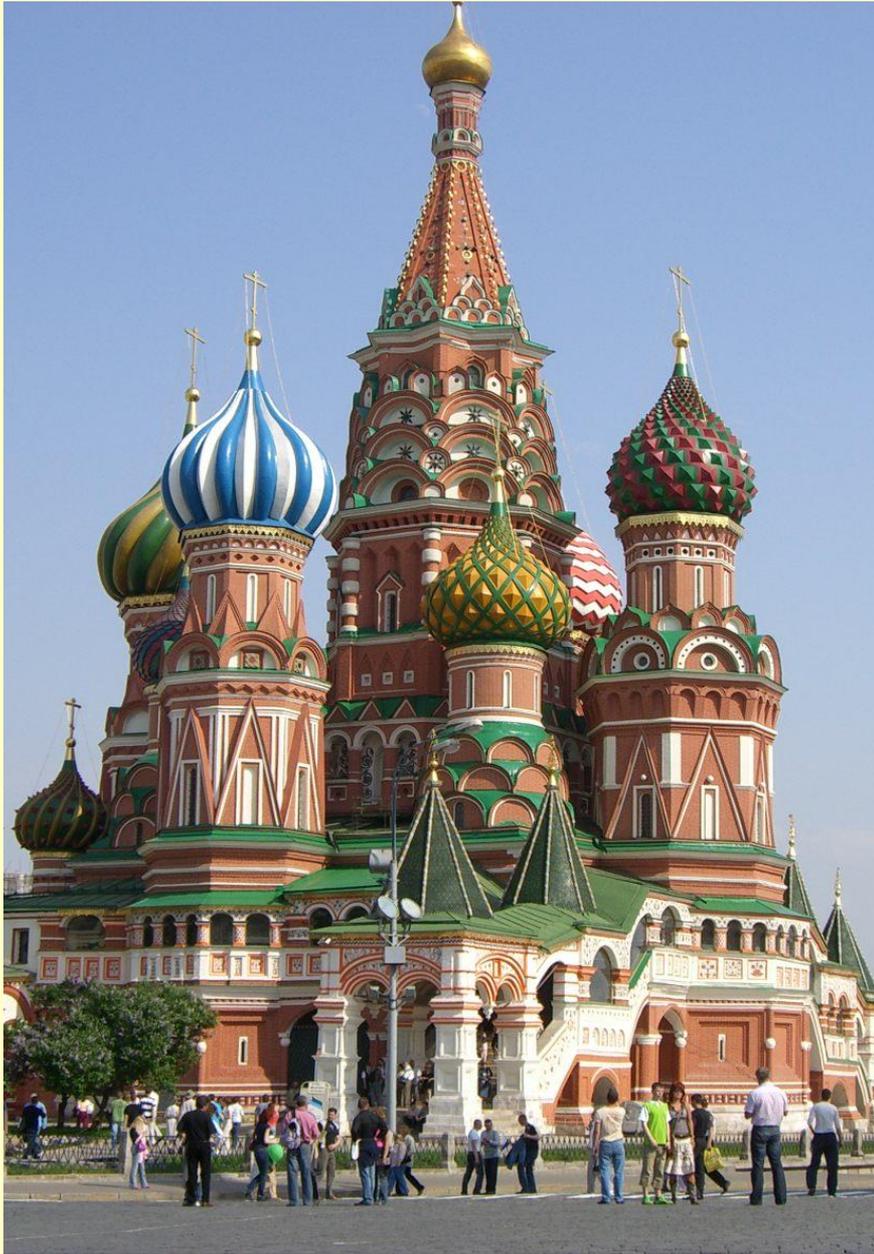


In Sister Faustina's Diary, we encounter, further- more, qualifying terms that express the Church's deepest essence. These correspond to the concept of the Mystical Body of Christ.

***We all make up one organism in Jesus (Diary 1364);*** Sister Faustina grasped the mystery of this most wonderful bond and union of Christ with those who believe in Him. She laid stress on the invisible and supernatural link with Jesus who - despite having departed from this world - still remains in a living, vital bond with the Church, uniting all into one.

## **C. The Charisma of Shedding Light on the Mystery of Divine Mercy in the Church**





Sister Faustina did not only love the Church as a Mother and as the Mystical Body of Christ, she also understood very well her own place in the Church; for she knew what task Jesus had entrusted to her and what charisma she had received for the benefit of the community of the People of God.

## IV. LOVE FOR THE EUCHARIST



Our union with God, initiated in the Church with Baptism, is deepened and strengthened in the sacrament of the Eucharist. The Eucharist was the center of Sister Faustina's spiritual life.

***Jesus concealed in the Host is everything to me*** (Diary 1037). Everything means ***the one and only trusted Friend, to whom she confided everything*** (Diary 504); the faithful best Friend, ever present, chasing away the feeling of loneliness.

# A. The Eucharist as Christ's Sacrifice

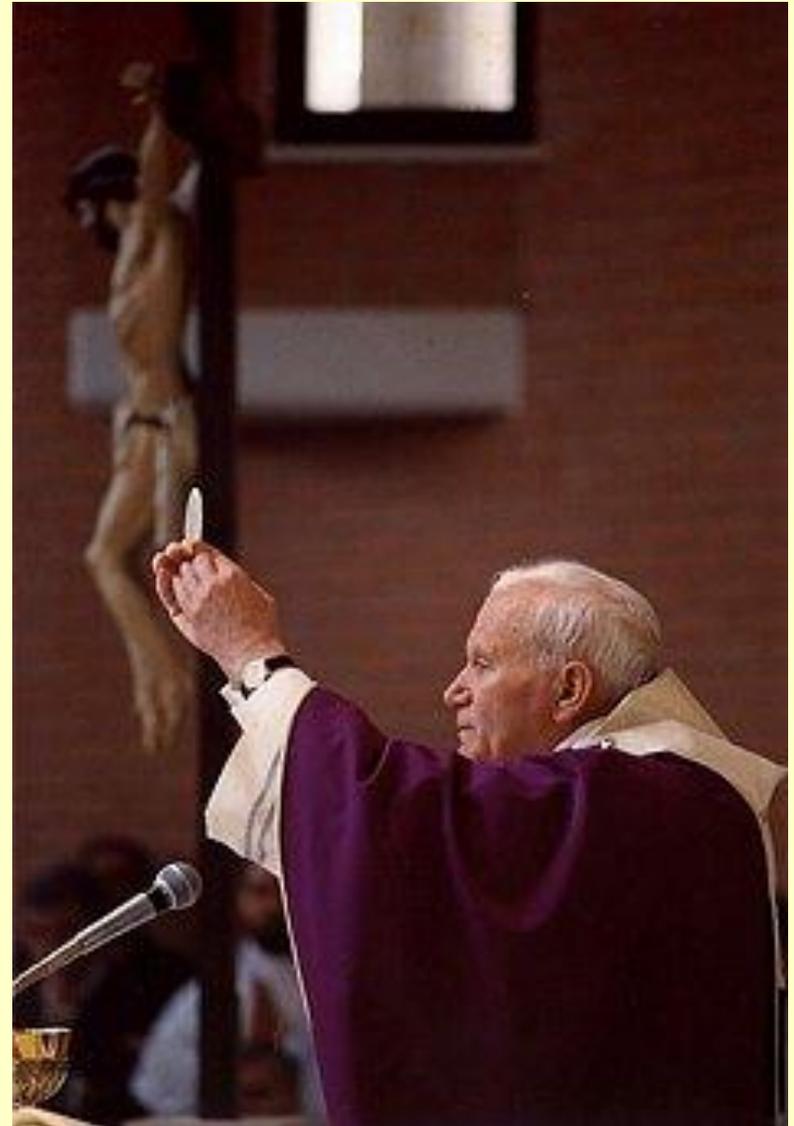
Sister Faustina saw the institution of the Eucharist as a manifestation of God's unfathomable mercy.

*(Diary 949)*

***The Eucharist, which is the source and summit of the Christian life***

was likewise called some years later by the Council Fathers

***The sacrament of Mercy***  
*(LG 11).*



## B. The Eucharist as Food



The Mass is not only a sacrifice. It is, moreover, a sacred banquet during which we receive Jesus himself. For Sister Faustina, the most solemn moment of her life was the moment when she would receive Holy Communion (*Diary 1804*).

She longed for every Communion (*Diary 1804*) and gave thanks for every Communion, confessing that she feared the day on which she might not receive it (*Diary 1826*). She praised Jesus who had left Himself in the Sacrament of the Altar, opening wide His mercy to us (*Diary 1747*).

## V. DEVOTION TO OUR LADY



**Devotion to Our Lady is the next remarkable element in Sister Faustina's spirituality.**

In addition to these words of Our Lord Sister Faustina gives us the Words of the Mother of Mercy, the Blessed Virgin



***“You have to speak to the world about His great mercy and prepare the world for the Second Coming of Him who will come, not as a merciful Savior, but as a just Judge. Oh how terrible is that day! Determined is the day of justice, the day of divine wrath. The angels tremble before it. Speak to souls about this great mercy while it is still the time for granting mercy. (Diary 635).***



## A. Mary - As Mother

Out of the many titles under which Mary is honored in Christianity we find most frequently in Sister Faustina's writings the title closest to man's heart :

Mother,

Mother of God,  
and my Mother.



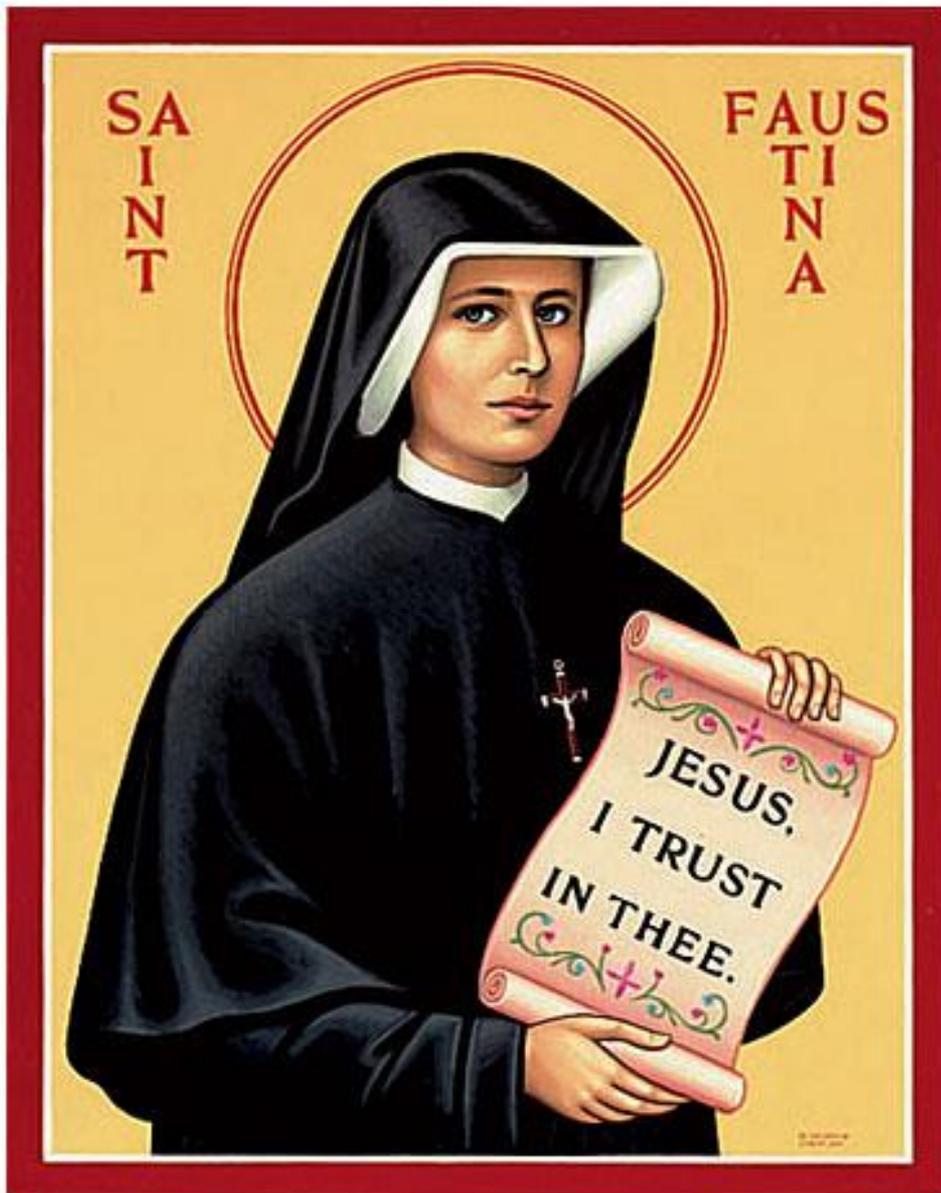
# MARY

- **M**MOTHER
- **A**ALWAYS
- **R**RESPONDS
- **Y**YES

## **B. Mary as The Model And Mistress of The Interior Life**

From the early centuries of Christianity, Mary was regarded as:

1. The model of evangelical life based on faith, hope and love;
2. The image of perfect communion with Christ in His life and apostolic mission;
3. The example of obedience and seeking to do the will of God in everything, of docility to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, and moreover of sensitivity to every possible need of others.

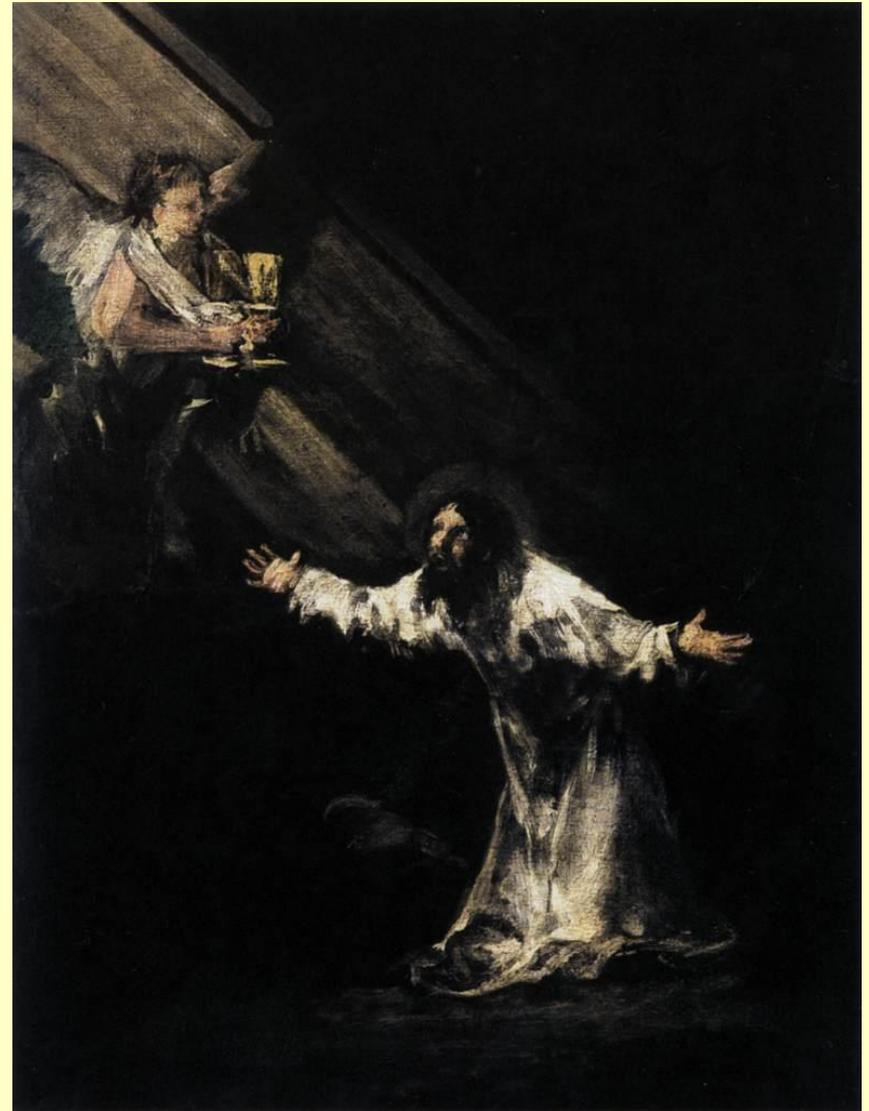


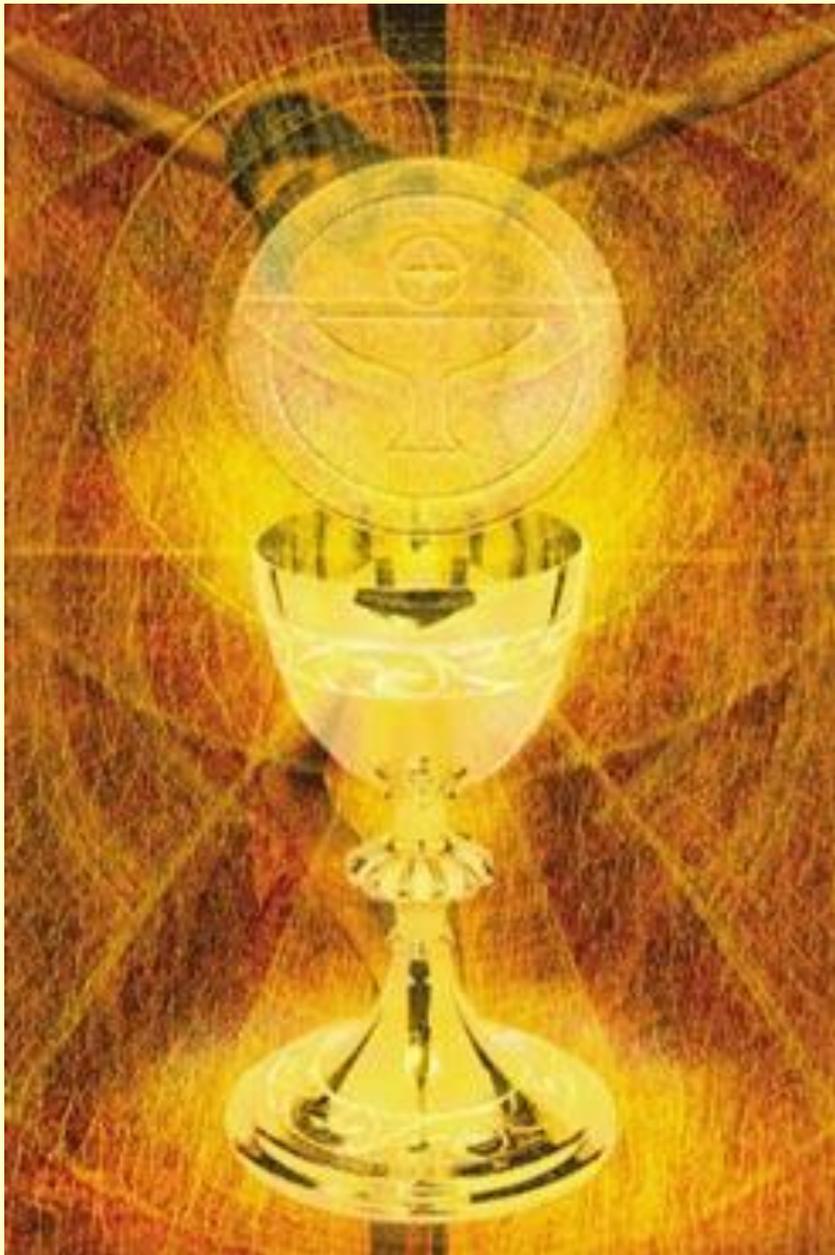
In the school of Sister Faustina, we can thus acquire: **a solid knowledge of the most difficult subject; namely, the art of living in the spirit of childlike trust toward God and mercy toward neighbor.**

## The spirituality of Divine Mercy is very healthy, because:

- on the one hand, it guards against **religionism** (that is, against practicing the Christian life only in prayer), since it calls for performing deeds of mercy;

- on the other hand, it prevents practical horizontalism (which would reduce religiousness to performing charitable works), since this spirituality requires a living contact with God.





## At the heart of this spirituality lies

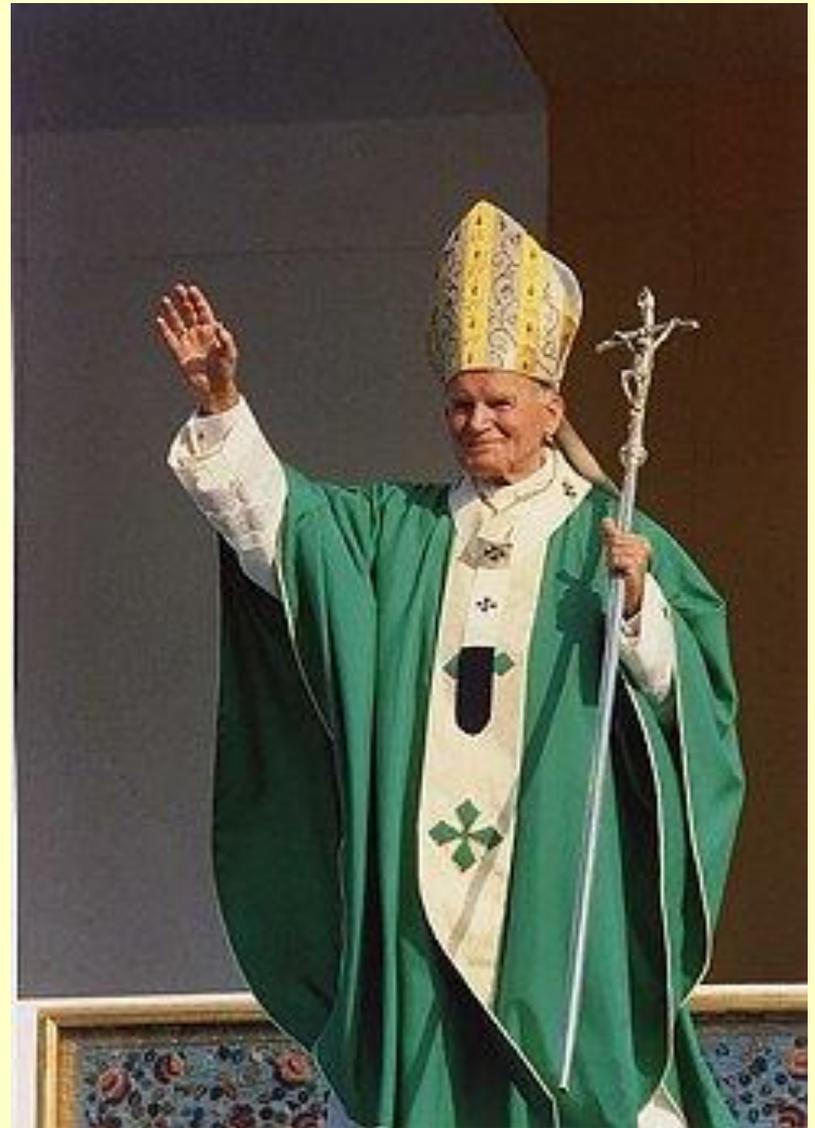
- the knowledge and contemplation of the mystery of Divine Mercy in everyday life;
- its nourishment and strength is love of the Eucharist,
- its certitude - obedience to the Church,
- its consolidation and model - devotion to Our Lady of Mercy.

**HOMILY OF THE HOLY  
FATHER JOHN PAUL II**

*Błonie, Kraków, 18 August 2002*

**"God, rich in mercy". This phrase in a way captures the entire truth about the love of God which has redeemed humanity.** *"God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ" (Eph 2:4-5). The fullness of this love was revealed in the sacrifice of the Cross. For "greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13).*

*Here is the measure of God's love!  
Here is the measure of God's mercy!*





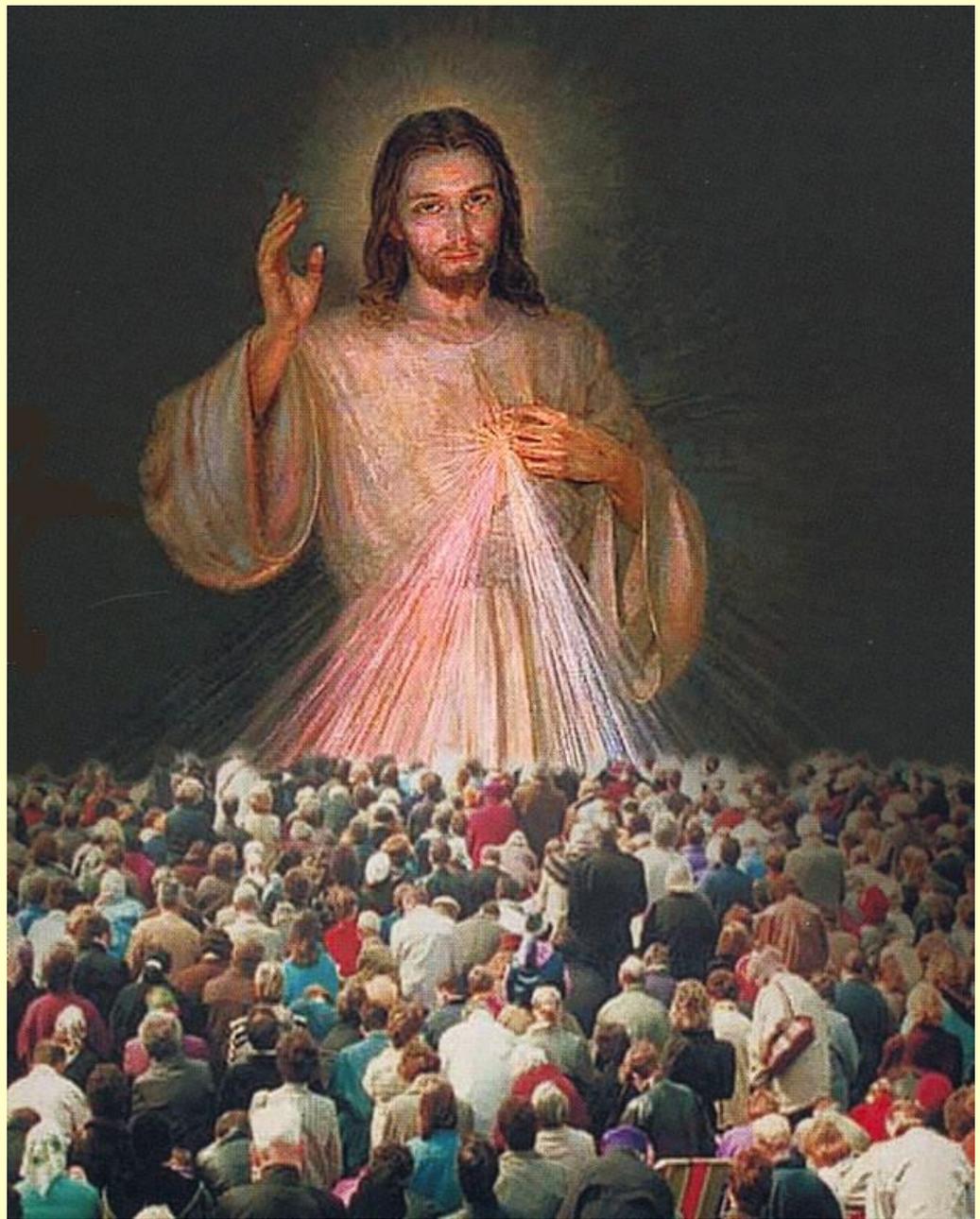
**God has chosen our own times for this purpose.** Perhaps because the twentieth century, despite indisputable achievements in many areas, was marked in a particular way by the "*mystery of iniquity*". With this heritage both of good and of evil, we have entered the new millennium. New prospects of development are opening up before mankind, together with hitherto unheard-of dangers.



**Frequently man lives as if God did not exist, and even puts himself in God's place.** He claims for himself the Creator's right to interfere in the mystery of human life. He wishes to determine human life through genetic manipulation and to establish the limit of death. Rejecting divine law and moral principles, he openly attacks the family. In a variety of ways he attempts to silence the voice of God in human hearts; he wishes to make God the "great absence" in the culture and the conscience of peoples. The "mystery of iniquity" continues to mark the reality of the world.

***I wish solemnly to entrust  
the world to Divine Mercy.***

I do so with the burning desire that the message of God ' s merciful love, proclaimed here through Saint Faustina, *may be made known to all the peoples of the earth* and fill their hearts with hope. May this message radiate from this place to our beloved homeland and throughout the world. May the binding promise of the Lord Jesus be fulfilled: from here there must go forth "the spark which will prepare the world for his final coming" (cf. *Diary*, 1732).





*Bracia Apostolami*

*Bozige Milosindaria*

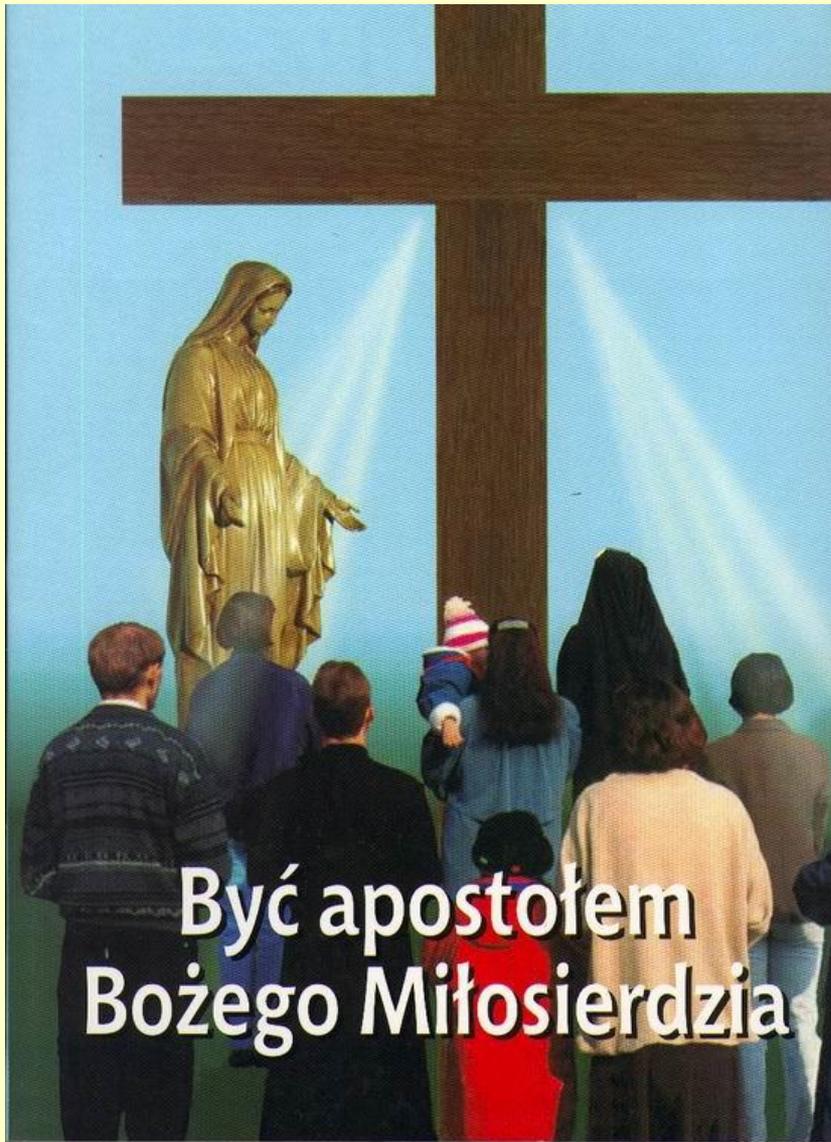
*Jan Pawel II*

This spark needs to be lighted by the grace of God. This fire of mercy needs to be passed on to the world. *In the mercy of God the world will find peace and mankind will find happiness!* I entrust this task to you, dear Brothers and Sisters, to the Church in Kraków and Poland, and to all the votaries of Divine Mercy who will come here from Poland and from throughout the world.

***May you be  
witnesses to  
mercy!***

**HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II**

*Kraków-Łagiewniki, 17 August 2002*



Być apostołem  
Bożego Miłosierdzia

*May you  
be  
witnesses  
to mercy!*

*John Paul II*



*The Apostolic Movement  
of the Divine Mercy*





## The Origin of the Apostolic Movement of Divine Mercy

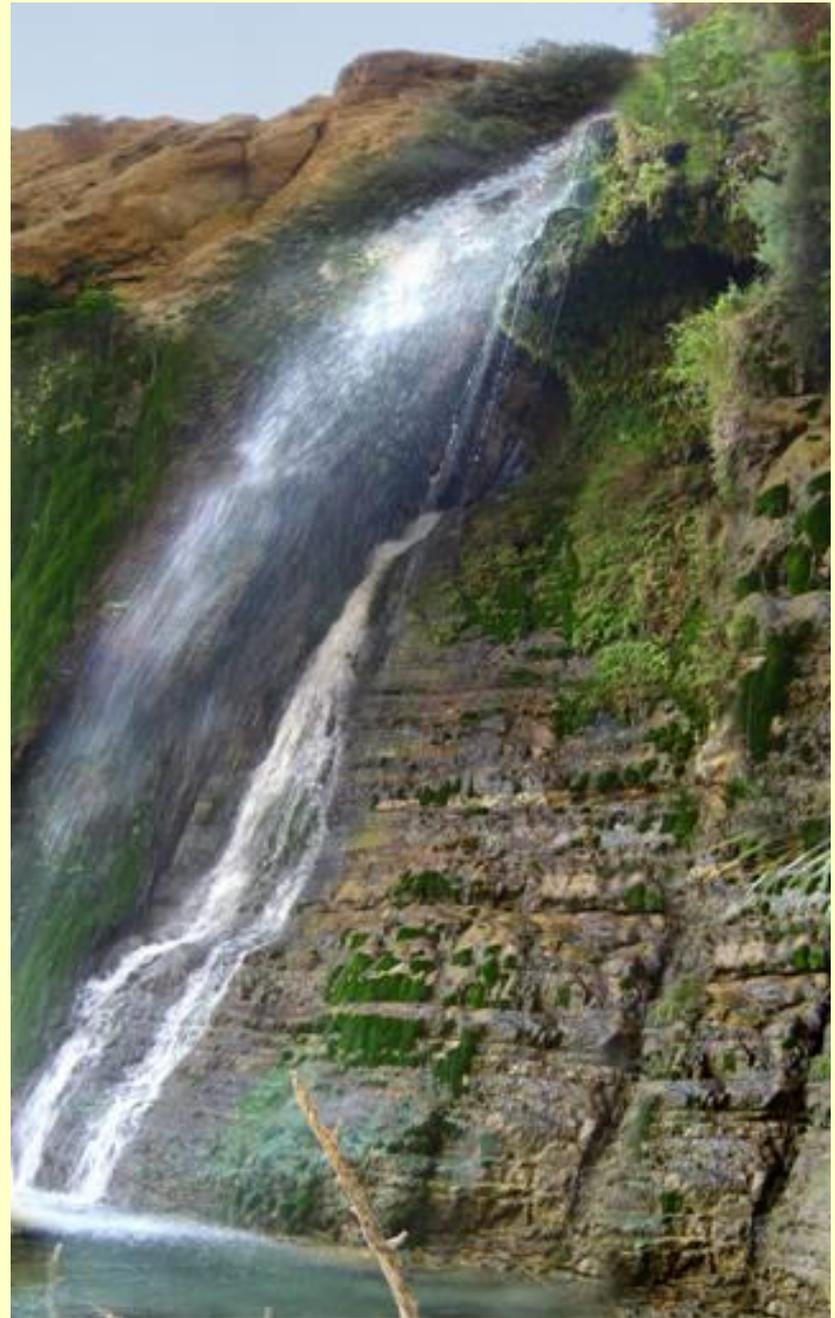
**The Apostolic Movement of the Divine Mercy sprung from the charisma and mystical experience of Saint Faustina.** It undertakes the task of proclaiming to the world the message of Mercy through deeds, words and prayer; it strives for union with God on the path of trusting in Him and practicing mercy toward neighbors.



**Here, Divine Mercy image was publicly venerated in Vilnius for the conclusion of the Jubilee Year of Redemption**

The beginnings of the idea of this work goes back to the year 1935. At that time, Sister Faustina enjoyed the grace of contemplation and a profound life with God; she was content that the wishes of the Lord Jesus were already partially fulfilled because His image had been painted and on the first Sunday after Easter, on April 26-28, 1935, it was publicly displayed and venerated in Ostra Brama during the celebrations connected with the ending of the Jubilee Year of the Redemption of the world.

Still, her joy was marred by a presentiment of new tasks. *I was frightened at their greatness - she recorded in her Diary - and felt myself quite incapable of fulfilling them (Diary 429).* It was then that she heard the words of the Lord Jesus: ***You will prepare the world for My final coming.*** *These words moved me deeply - she writes further on in her spiritual diary - and although I pretended not to hear them, I understood them very well and had no doubt about them (Diary 429).*





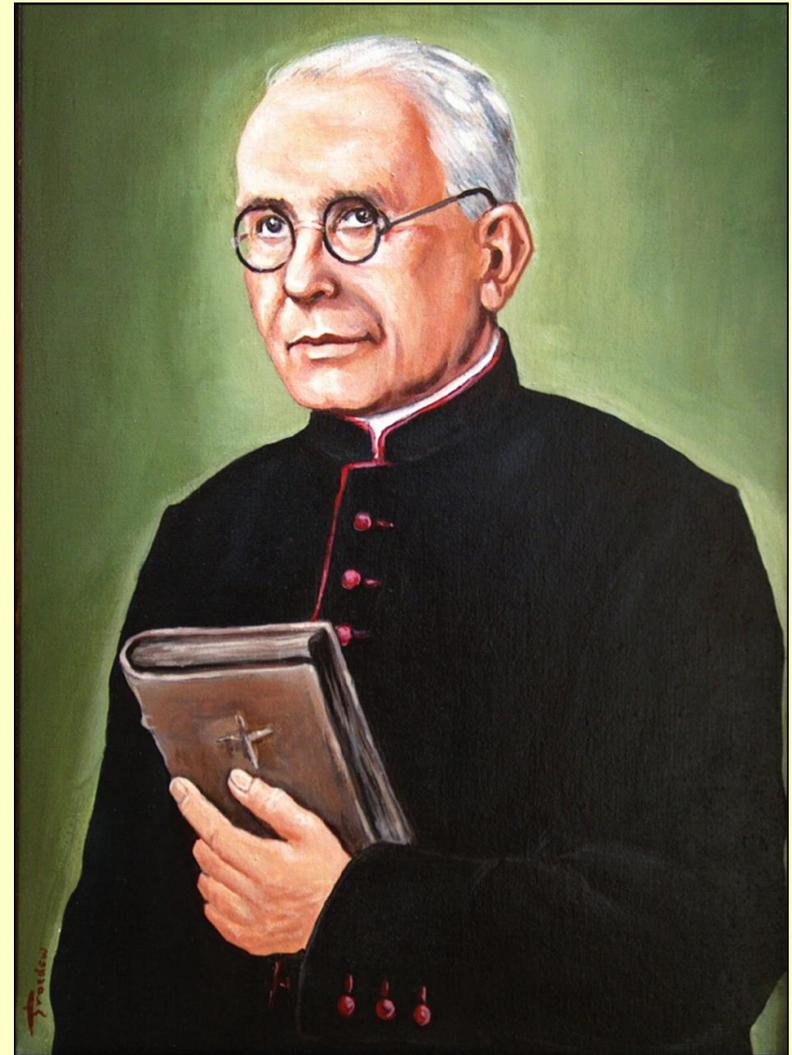
Saint Faustina's home in Vilnius

In the context of these spiritual experiences on the Day of the Pentecost, on June 9, 1935, she received yet another order, this time in the form of a concrete task:

***By your entreaties, you and your companions shall obtain mercy for yourselves and for the world (Diary 435).***

On the day following the conversation with Father M. Sopoćko (June 30, 1935), Sister Faustina saw Jesus during Holy Mass. He told her that He desired ***that such a Congregation be founded as soon as possible*** (*Diary 438*).

The Lord then defined its spirit: it was to be modeled on His life ***from the crib to His death on the Cross***. He also defined its task: to spread and implore God's mercy for the entire world (*Diary 438*).



**The Servant of God  
Father Michael Sopoćko  
(1888-1975)**



Such were the circumstances  
beginning of the  
**Apostolic Movement of  
the Divine Mercy.**

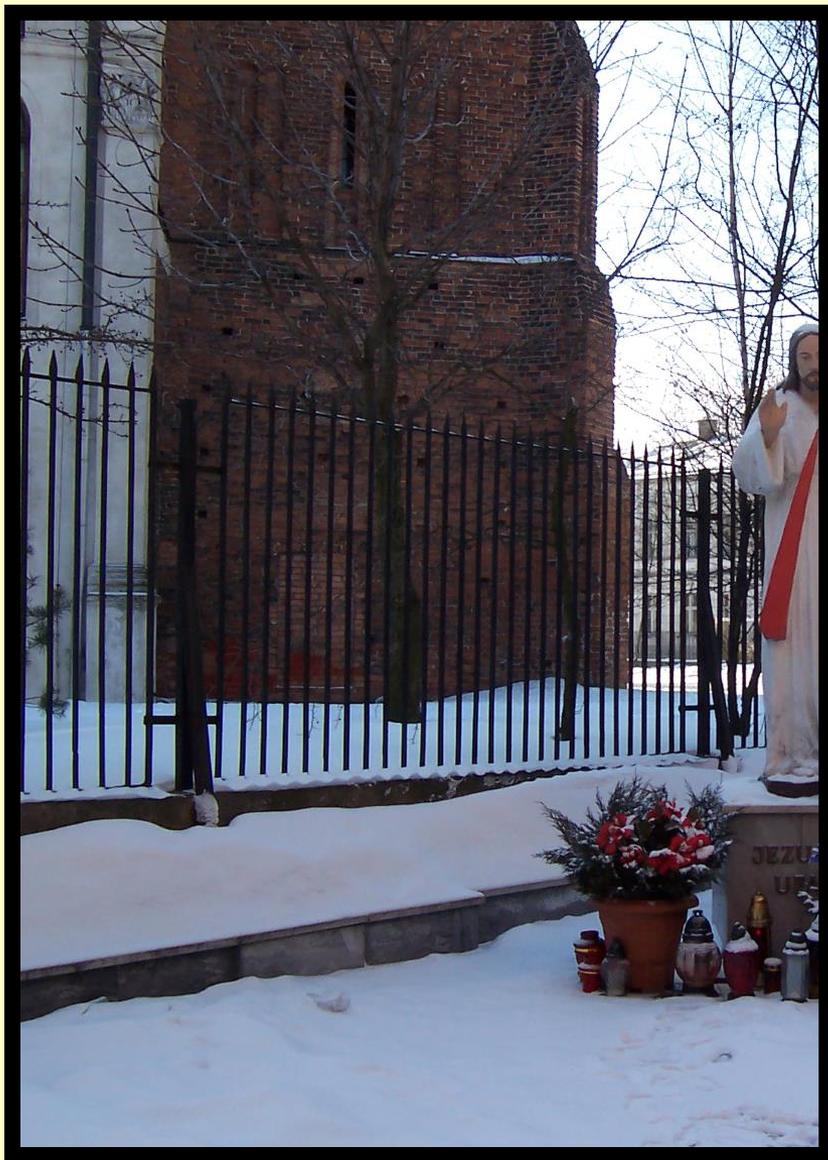
- Its creator and initiator  
is the Lord Jesus  
Himself;
- it is He who unveils  
before His "secretary"  
His intention to create  
such a "congregation,"  
**namely, a movement  
whose members are to  
imitate Him "from the  
crib to His death on  
the Cross" as well as  
proclaim the mercy of  
God and implore it for  
the whole world.**



In the end, under the date of April 27, 1937, she recorded that during Holy Mass, the Lord God enlightened her and gave her profound understanding concerning this work, and not a shadow of a doubt remained in her soul (*Diary 1154*). This work is one - she recorded in her *Diary* - but has, as it were, three aspects.



- *The first is that "souls separated from the world will burn as an offering before God's throne and beg for mercy for the whole world... and by their entreaties, they will obtain blessings for priests, and through their prayers prepare the world for the final coming of Jesus"*  
(Diary 1155).



**Place of the First revelation  
concerning the Image of  
Merciful Jesus (Plock)**

**The second** aspect is to create religious congregations that join prayer to acts of mercy. *In particular, they will defend the souls of children against the spirit of evil. Prayer and merciful deeds are all that will be required of these souls (...) .And in this egoistic world they will try to rouse up love, the mercy of Jesus (Diary 1156).*



**Plock. Convent 's Bakery  
where St. Faustina  
worked.**

**To the third aspect everyone in the world can belong (Diary 1157); without any obligation to take vows and in exchange for prayer and deeds of mercy these persons will have a share in all the merits and privileges of the whole congregation (Diary 1157). A member of this group ought to perform at least one act of mercy a day, but there can be many more, for such deeds can easily be carried out by anyone, even the poorest. (Diary 1158)**

With the *Diary* entry of April 27, 1937, ends the development of the idea of the Apostolic Movement of the Divine Mercy, which in the Lord's utterances were to be understood from the very beginning in a very broad sense - as a movement; whereas in Sister Faustina's mind, it matured gradually, evolving from the concept of a cloistered contemplative convent, to active congregations, and eventually to the inclusion of lay persons in this work.





**The Shrine in Krakow**

Later, she wrote that the members of this "congregation" were to be people representing different callings and states in life. Thus, they were to be both men and women, and even all the people living in the world. This wide range of vocations points to a different meaning of this definition: to the biblical sense of the word "congregation," equivalent to the Hebrew term "qahal." The Lord Jesus used this latter term in His conversation with Sister Faustina.

The above religious "congregation" can be characterized by means of the following constituent features:

- this congregation owes its existence to a "convocation" or "summons" issued by God;
- it gathers around the Meeting Tent or a sanctuary, based on the conviction that God lives within it;
- God reveals and expresses His will to the gathered people through theophany or else through an authorized representative;
- the congregation gathers for religious, supplicatory, or penitent purposes and is subject to successive consecration to God.





Thus, the Apostolic Movement of the Divine Mercy, as defined by the Lord Jesus, is as it were

- a newly summoned congregation,
- a new "calling" of the People of God who at this phase in history are to fulfill a goal and certain precisely defined tasks indicated by God.

**They consist in:**

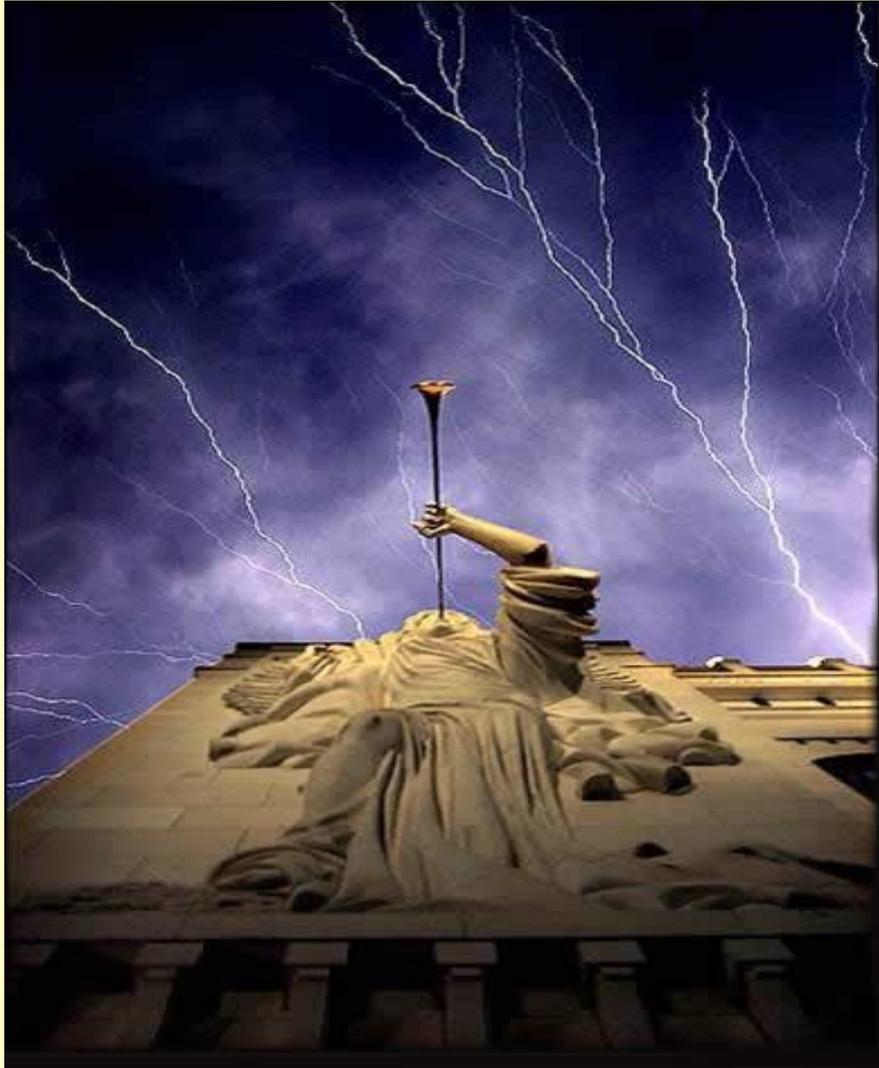
- **renewing the Christian life,**
- **proclaiming of the mystery of the mercy of God,**
- **and imploring it for the whole world.**

**It is worth emphasizing here that these are precisely the tasks which the Holy Father John Paul II placed before the whole Church in his encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*.**

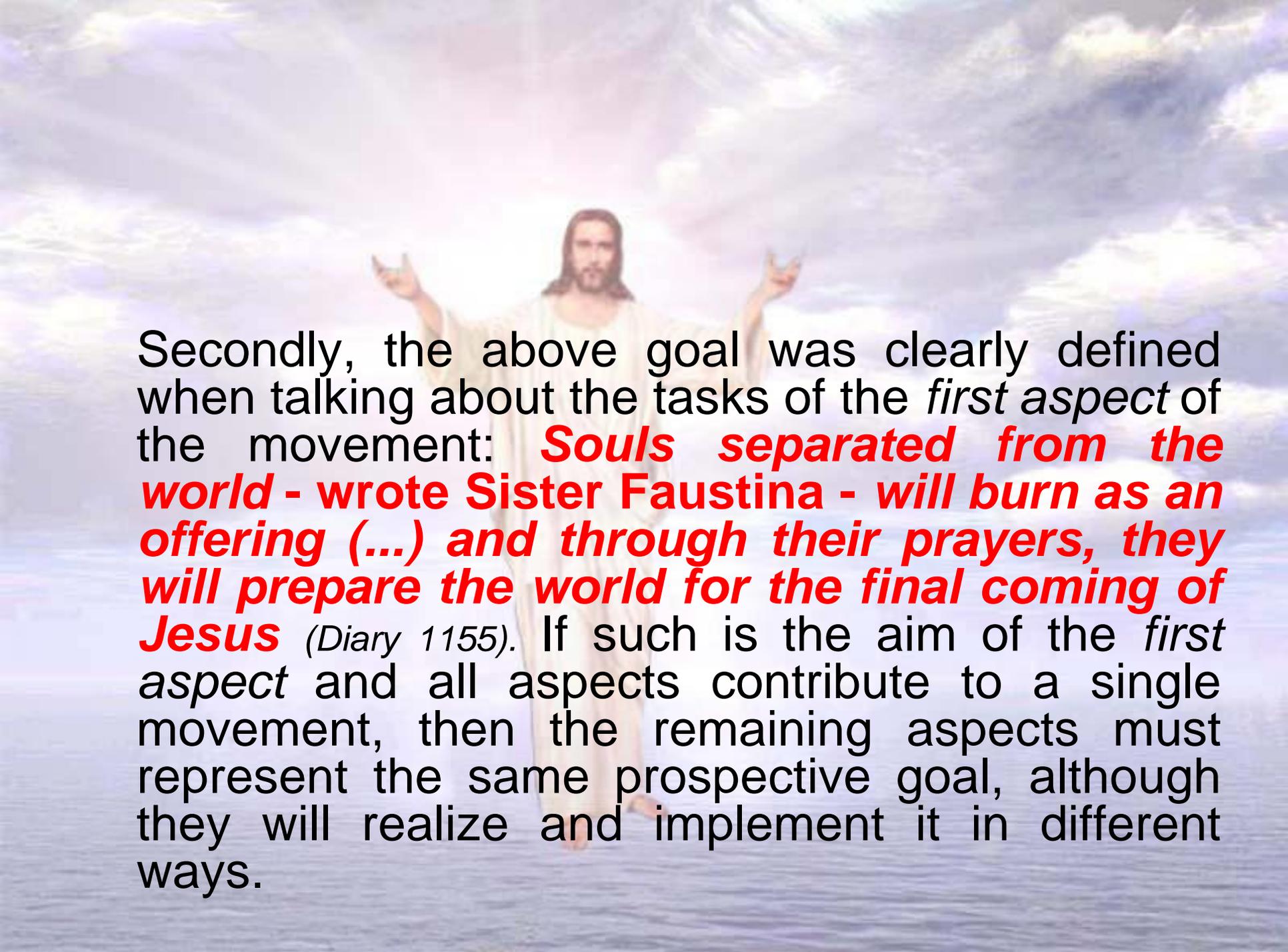


God demanded of her an interior sacrifice, boundless trust, and abandonment to His will in order to lay a living foundation for a great work in the Church; namely, **the Apostolic Movement of the Divine Mercy** which flows from Sister Faustina's charisma and mystical experience; in her it found its model and perfect guide on the ways of the interior life and apostolic activity.

# The Perspective Goal of the Apostolic Movement of the Divine Mercy



***You will prepare the world for My final coming*** (Diary 429), said the Lord Jesus to Sister Faustina. These words seem to define the prospective goal of the apostolic movement of the Divine Mercy. For, with this very sentence, there begins a whole new chapter in Sister Faustina's mission. The Lord Jesus' subsequent stipulations concerning the apostolic movement of the Divine Mercy are closely related to this very first injunction.



Secondly, the above goal was clearly defined when talking about the tasks of the *first aspect* of the movement: ***Souls separated from the world - wrote Sister Faustina - will burn as an offering (...) and through their prayers, they will prepare the world for the final coming of Jesus*** (*Diary 1155*). If such is the aim of the *first aspect* and all aspects contribute to a single movement, then the remaining aspects must represent the same prospective goal, although they will realize and implement it in different ways.

Thirdly, the Lord Jesus had talked about this mission on many occasions.

- *Before I come as the just Judge - we read already at the beginning of the Diary - I am coming first as the King of Mercy (Diary 83).*

- *Speak to the world about My mercy; let all mankind recognize My unfathomable mercy. It is a sign for the end times; after it will come a day of justice. While there is still time, let them have recourse to the fount of My mercy; let them profit from the Blood and Water which gushed forth for them (Diary 848).*

- *Secretary of My mercy, write, tell souls about this great mercy of Mine, because the awful day, the day of My justice, is near (Diary 965).*

*Before the Day of Justice I am sending the Day of Mercy (Diary 1588)*



If such is the goal of Sister Faustina's entire mission, then it is likewise the goal of the apostolic movement which is to fulfill this mission within the Church and in the world.



Fourthly, the Mother of God also pointed out that this is the goal of Sister Faustina's mission and, at the same time, the goal of the entire apostolic movement of the Divine Mercy. When She appeared to Sister Faustina, She said: *I gave the Savior to the world; as for you, you have to speak to the world about His great mercy and prepare the world for the Second Coming of Him* (Diary 635). And elsewhere, when addressing Sister Faustina and her companions, she says: *Your lives must be like Mine: quiet and hidden, in unceasing union with God, pleading for humanity and preparing the world for the second coming of God* (Diary 625)



The four arguments presented above seem to support the thus formulated prospective goal of the movement:  
*You will prepare the world for My final coming* (Diary 429).

The defined goal of the Apostolic Movement of the Divine Mercy can be realized by fulfilling the following tasks:

- renewal of Christian life in the spirit of trust in God and mercy toward one's neighbors,
- proclaiming the mystery of the Divine Mercy,
- imploring the mercy of God for the whole world.

# Renewal of Christian Life in the Spirit of Trust and Mercy



*My Spirit shall be the rule of your life. Your life is to be modeled on Mine, from the crib to My death on the Cross* (Diary 438), said the Lord Jesus addressing all those who would believe in Him and worship His mercy in the sources, that is, the Gospels

Thus, the Apostolic Movement of the Divine Mercy focuses primarily on:

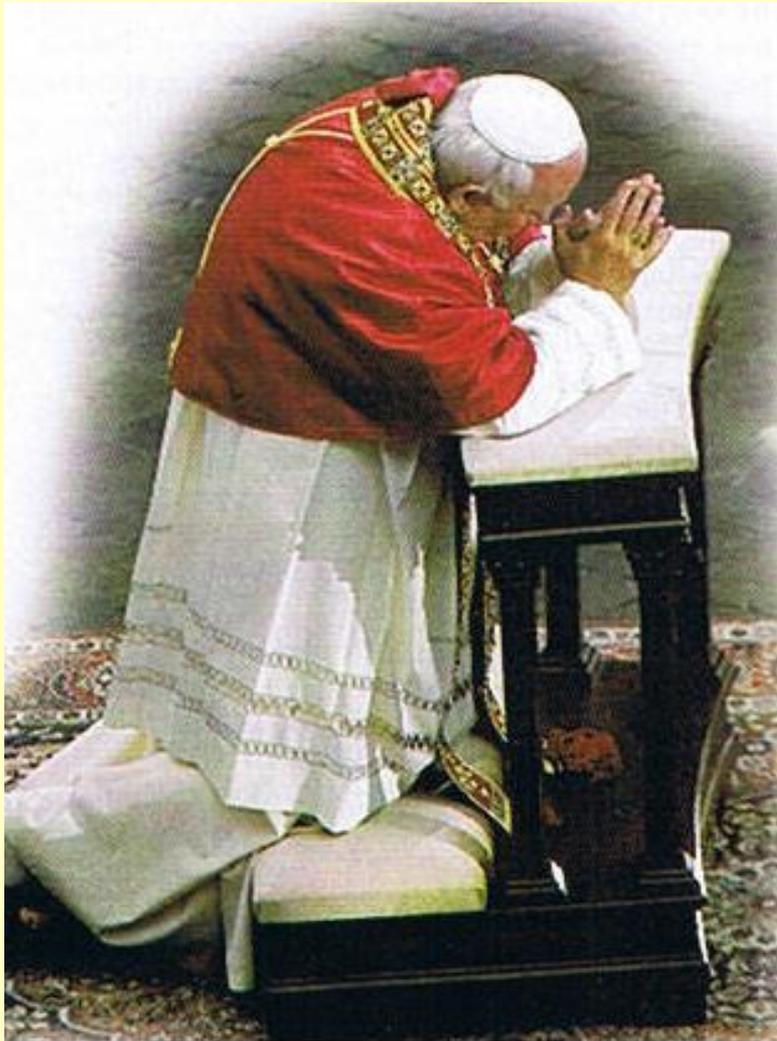
- imitating Jesus *from the crib to His death on the Cross* in the spirit of childlike trust toward the heavenly Father
- and in an attitude of mercy toward neighbors, and particularly toward sinners



# The Attitude of Trust in God

Trust is the most characteristic feature of the spirituality of the apostles of Divine Mercy. While instructing Sister Faustina, the Lord Jesus had talked to her on many occasions about trust; He explained to her what trust is and what role it plays in man's life. Trust is an attitude which Jesus desires from all creatures (*Diary 1059*), and particularly from souls striving for perfection who should distinguish themselves by boundless trust in God's mercy (*Diary 1578*). The Lord Jesus also wants us to encourage others and lead them onto the path of trust, for no soul will find justification *until it turns with confidence to God's mercy* (*Diary 570*), and mankind will not have peace, until it turns to the Fount of His Mercy (*Diary 699*).

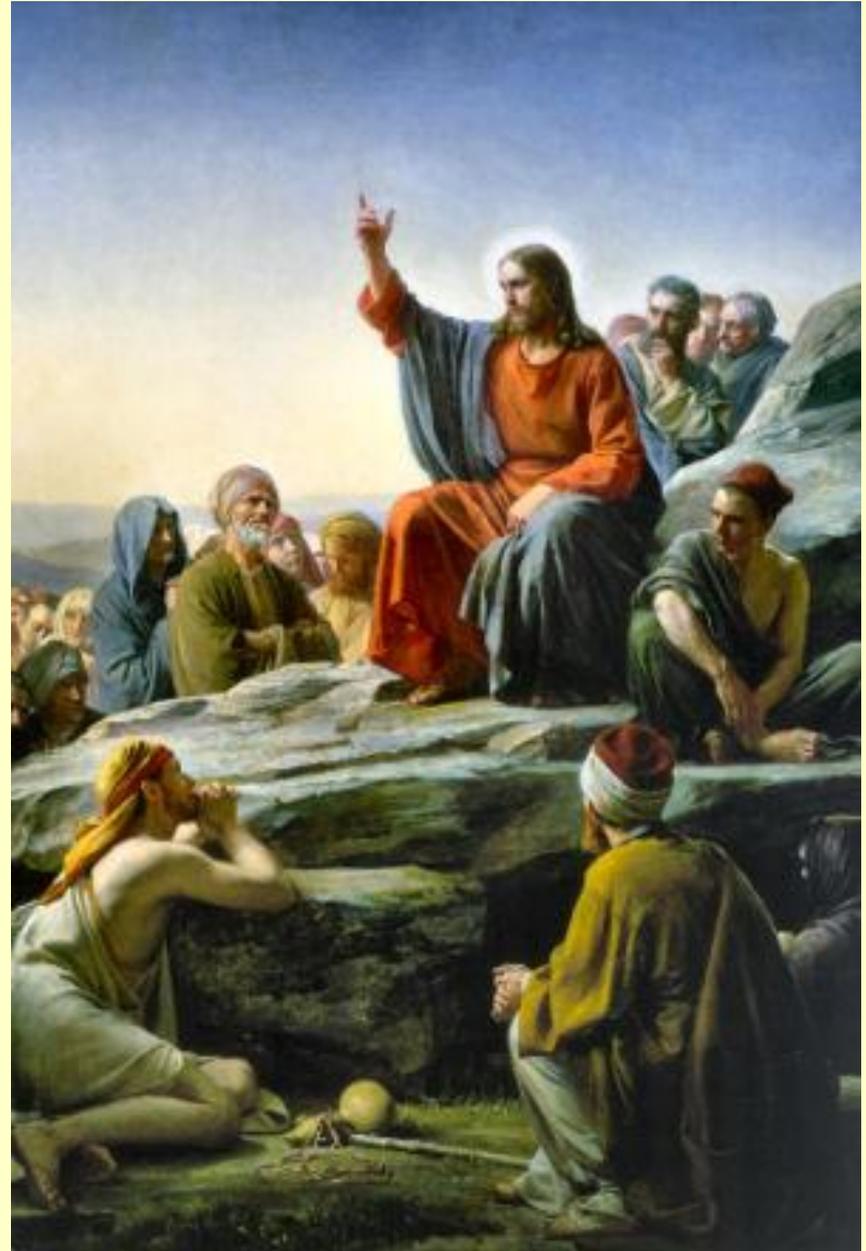
# The Attitude of Mercy Toward One's Neighbors



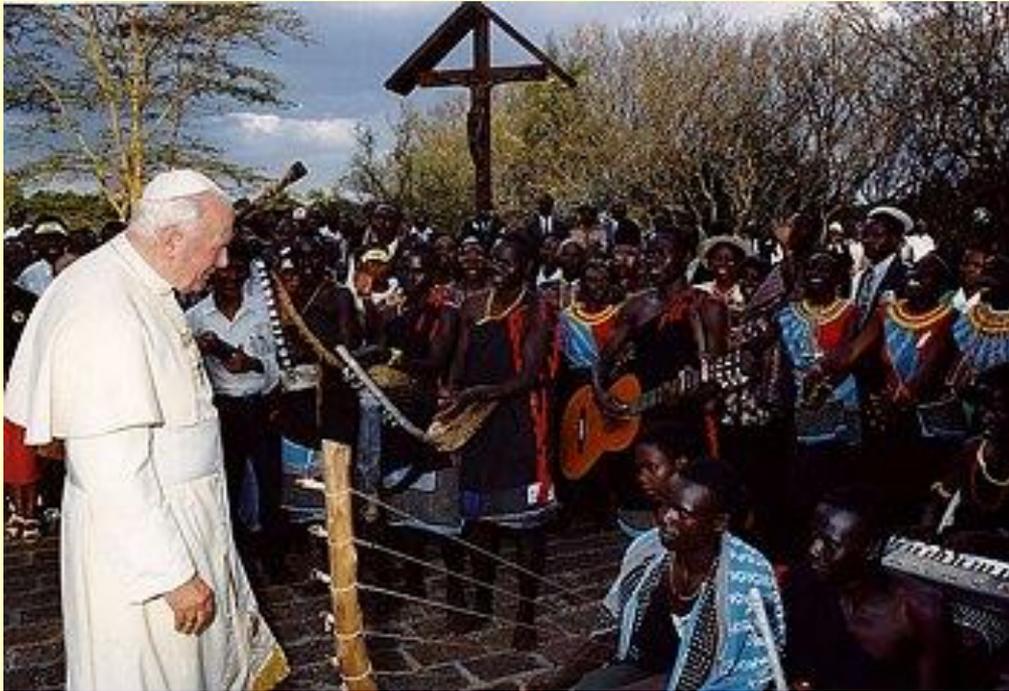
*Every soul (...) should reflect My mercy* (Diary 1148), the Lord Jesus told Sister Faustina, reminding her about the evangelical requirement of showing active love toward every human being, even an enemy.

**This commandment refers particularly to the apostles of the Divine Mercy who are to be a living sign of God's mercy acting in the world.**

**The practice of active love toward one's neighbor is the fundamental apostolic task of all those who worship the Divine Mercy.**



# Proclaiming the Mystery of Divine Mercy



The fundamental form of apostolate in this movement is the exercise of deeds of mercy with respect to one's neighbors out of love of Jesus; every Christian is obliged to this by reason of baptism. Yet, one cannot stop at this, for Sister Faustina wrote that *God demands that there be a Congregation which will proclaim the mercy of God (Diary 436).*



On the pages of Sister Faustina's *Diary* we come across Jesus' insistent calls:

- *Tell the whole world about My inconceivable mercy (Diary 699);*

- *do not tire of proclaiming My mercy (Diary 1521);*

- *do not be discouraged by the difficulties you encounter in proclaiming My mercy (Diary 1142);*

- *tell souls about this great mercy of Mine, because the awful day of My justice, is near (Diary 965).*

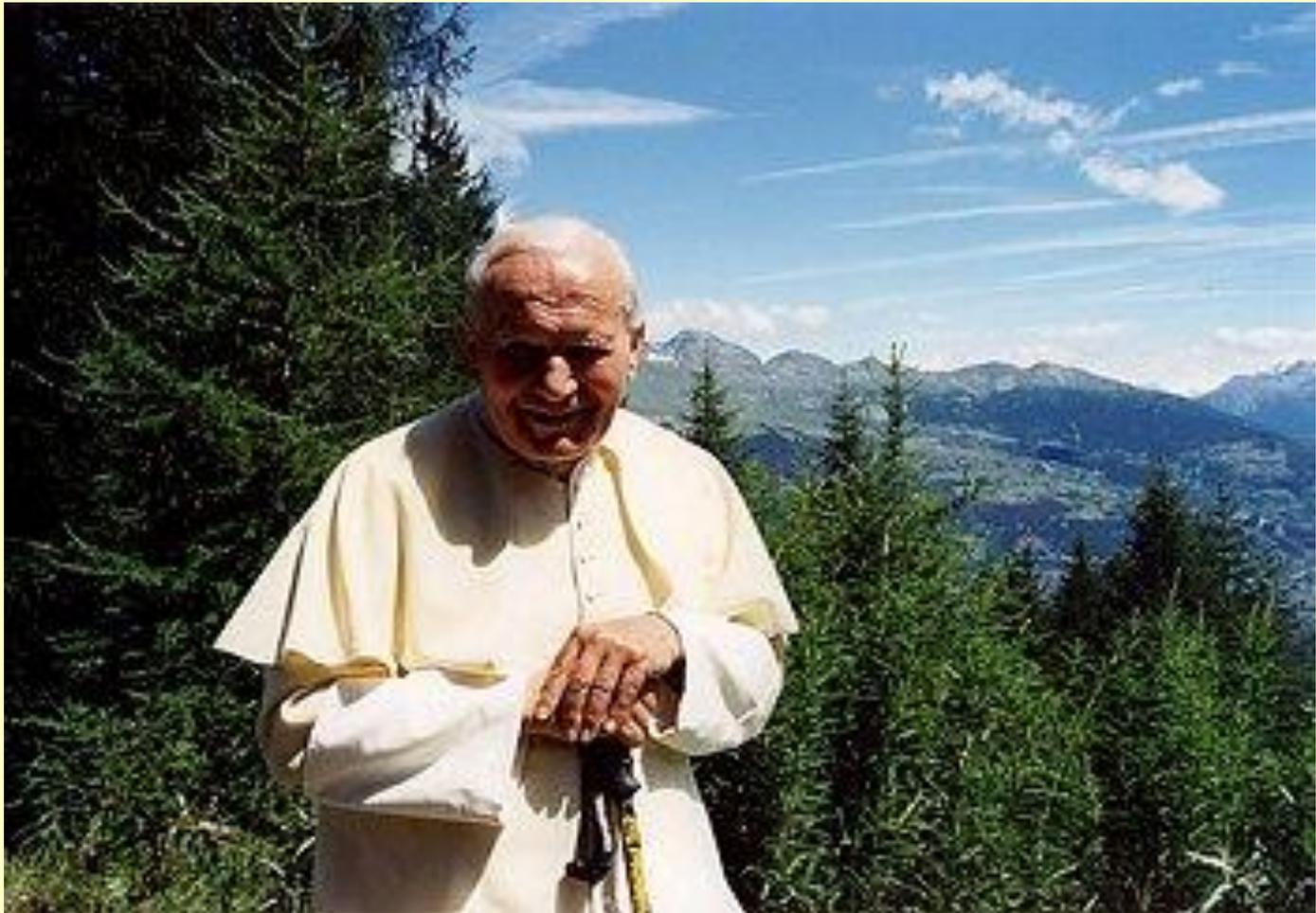
- *Let all mankind recognize My unfathomable mercy. It is a sign for the end times; after it will come the day of justice (Diary 848).*



The Kowalski family bedroom

For this apostolic task to be effectively fulfilled, it must be based on one's personal religious experience. It must flow from experiencing the mystery of the Divine Mercy in one's soul. That is why the Lord Jesus first said: *My spirit shall be the rule of your life. Your life is to be modeled on Mine, from the crib to My death on the Cross. Penetrate My mysteries, and you will know the abyss of My mercy towards creatures and My unfathomable goodness - and this you shall make known to the world. **Through your prayers, you shall mediate between heaven and earth.***

(Diary 438)



At the basis of proclaiming the mystery of Divine Mercy by word is the knowledge of this mystery of our faith. We should come to know the mystery of God's mercy in the work of creation, salvation, and glory very well and perceive its manifestations in our own life.



So, in order to be an apostle of the Divine Mercy and proclaim it to the world, we have to be aflame with it ourselves and reflect it in our own heart and deeds.

**Church where Saint Faustina was baptized**



# Imploring God's Mercy for the Whole World

*God demands that there be a Congregation which will proclaim the mercy of God to the world and, by its prayers, obtain it for the world (Diary 436), we read in Sister Faustina's Diary.*

Thus, another task for the apostles of the Divine Mercy is to implore God's mercy for the whole world. Already at the very beginning, when the Lord Jesus revealed this idea, He said to Sister Faustina: *You will reconcile earth with heaven, you will soften the just anger of God, and you will plead for mercy for the world (Diary 531).*



The Lord Jesus also wants us to offer prayers and sacrifices particularly for those people who are consecrated to God. *I place in your care* - He said to Sister Faustina - *two pearls very precious to My Heart: these are the souls of priests and religious. You will pray particularly for them; their power will come from your diminishment* (Diary 531).

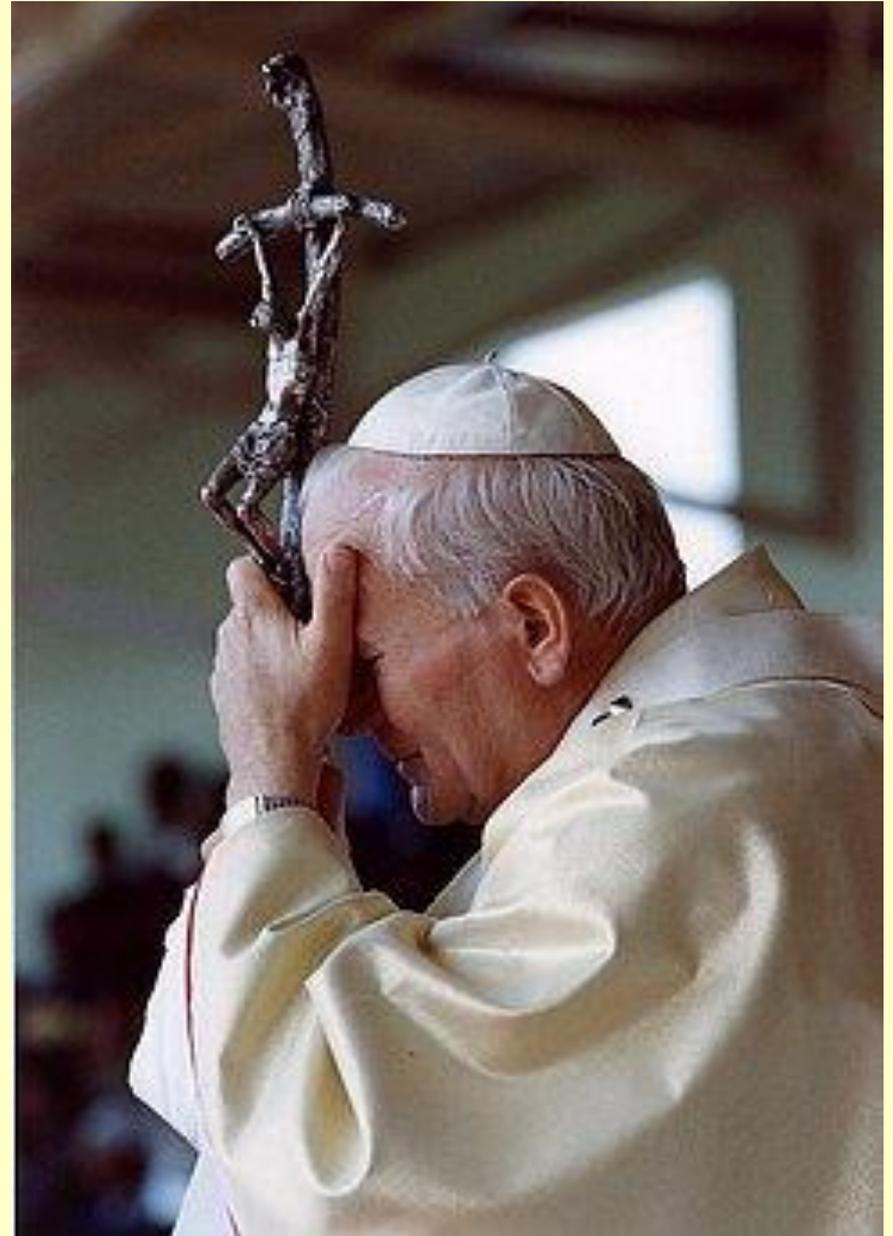
The Lord Jesus also tells us how this should be done.

We are to unite with Him as closely as possible through love and through everything that makes up our everyday life. In this way, we are able to participate in His salvific work.

*You will join prayers, fasts, mortifications, labors and all sufferings to My prayer, fasting, mortification, labors and sufferings* - the Lord Jesus instructed Sister Faustina - *and then they will have power before My Father* (Diary 531).



A special role in imploring God's mercy for the world is to be played by suffering. *There is but one price at which souls are bought* - the Lord Jesus told Sister Faustina - *and that is suffering united to My suffering on the cross* (Diary 324).



# Development

## The Beginnings

The Apostolic Movement of the Divine Mercy came into existence and began to develop already during Sister Faustina's lifetime, although she herself was not aware of the fact that the work, which the Lord Jesus had asked her to initiate, was already coming about. The gradual development of this Movement started at the moment when the devotion to Divine Mercy, in the forms handed down by Sister Faustina, began to be practiced. For Father Michał Sopoćko published images of the Merciful Jesus with the chaplet of Divine Mercy as well as a little booklet with prayers, entitled *Chrystus, Król Miłosierdzia* [Christ, King of Mercy] (first published in Krakow in 1937).





Internowanie zakonników z Niepokalanowa  
Internment of gray friars from Niepokalanów  
Internierte Franziskaner aus Niepokalanów  
L'internement des Franciscains de Niepokalan  
Интернированное духовенство из Непокалянова

## The Years of World War II

A dynamic development of the Apostolic Movement of the Divine Mercy occurred during the years of World War II when refugees and soldiers spread throughout the world the hope-inspiring message of Divine Mercy passed on by Sister Faustina and having the image of the Merciful Jesus as a visual sign.

## After World War II

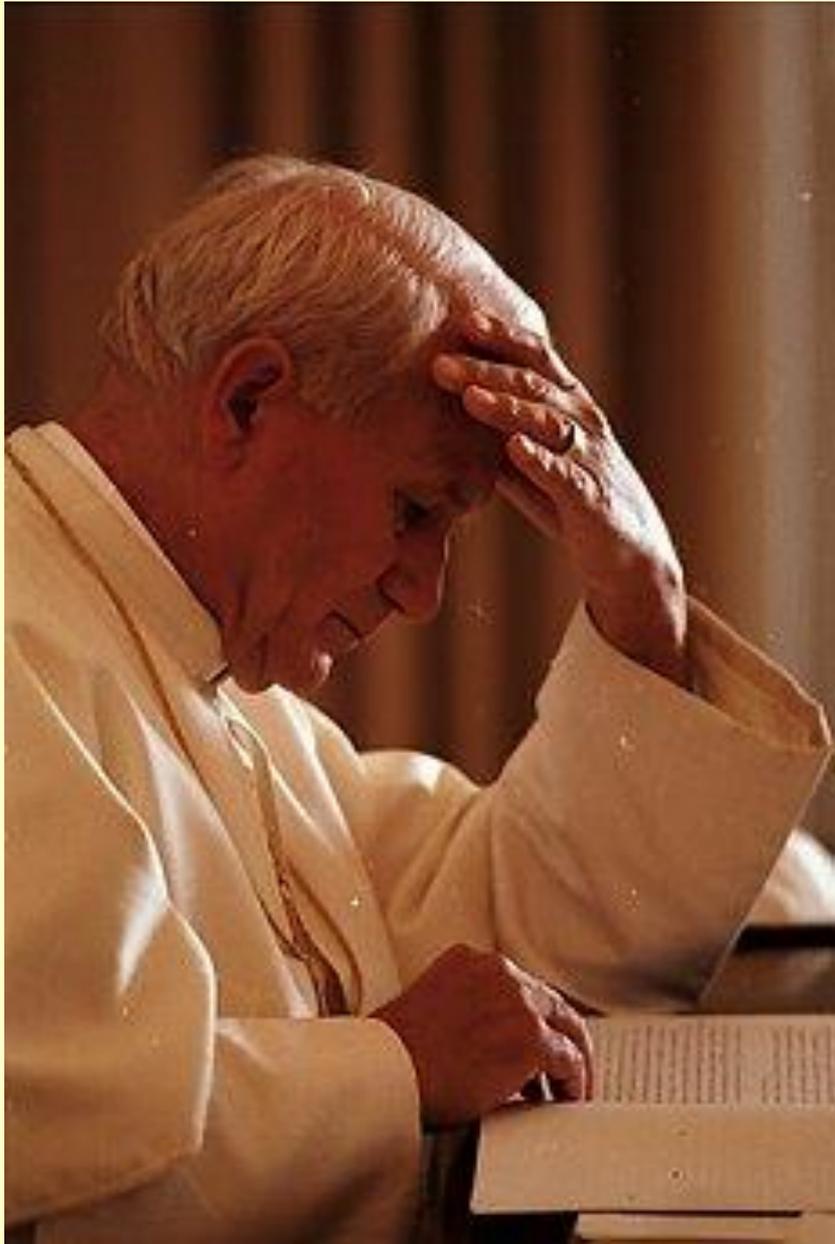
The post-war years, too, until 1959 were a time of dynamic development for this Movement. Successive centers which popularized the mission of Sister Faustina were created, among others, in England (in 1950 the American province of the Marians opened a house in Hereford (England), in which the cult of Divine Mercy was spread at first by means of brochures and books published in the USA, and then with their own publications), in France (since the year 1950, the Pallotines became involved in the propagation of the cult of Divine Mercy; they published brochures and booklets as well as thousands of images and leaflets which popularized the forms of the devotion passed on by Sister Faustina), in Italy (the Maria Stella - Doglioni bookstore in Rome and the Italian Secretariat for the Devotion to Divine Mercy in San Vito in Tagliamento, run by the Franciscans), and thanks to the activity of the center of the Marians in Stockbridge, English language materials on Divine Mercy reached many countries, among others, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, some countries in Asia and Africa.

## The Period of the Holy See's Notification

The spontaneously developing Apostolic Movement of the Divine Mercy was slowed down by the Holy See's Notification of 1959 which placed a ban on propagating the devotion to Divine Mercy in the forms handed down by Sister Faustina.

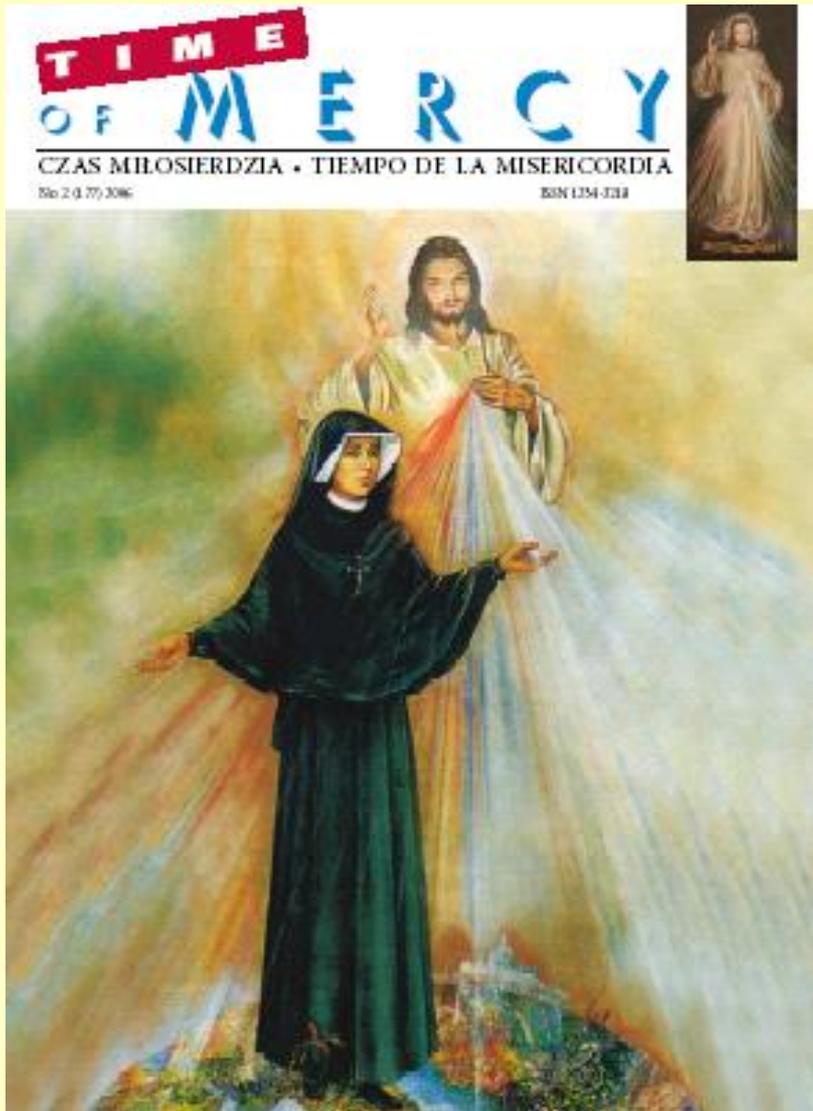


**Instruments of Discipline  
used by St. Faustina**



## After the Notification was Withdrawn

After the withdrawal of the Notification in 1978, the next phase in the development of the Apostolic Movement of the Divine Mercy began; it was facilitated by the publication of John Paul II's encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*, by the beatification and more recently the canonization of Sister Faustina, by the visit of the Holy Father to the Shrine of Divine Mercy in Krakow-Łagiewniki, and by his numerous addresses testifying to his lively interest in the message of Mercy passed on to us by Saint Faustina

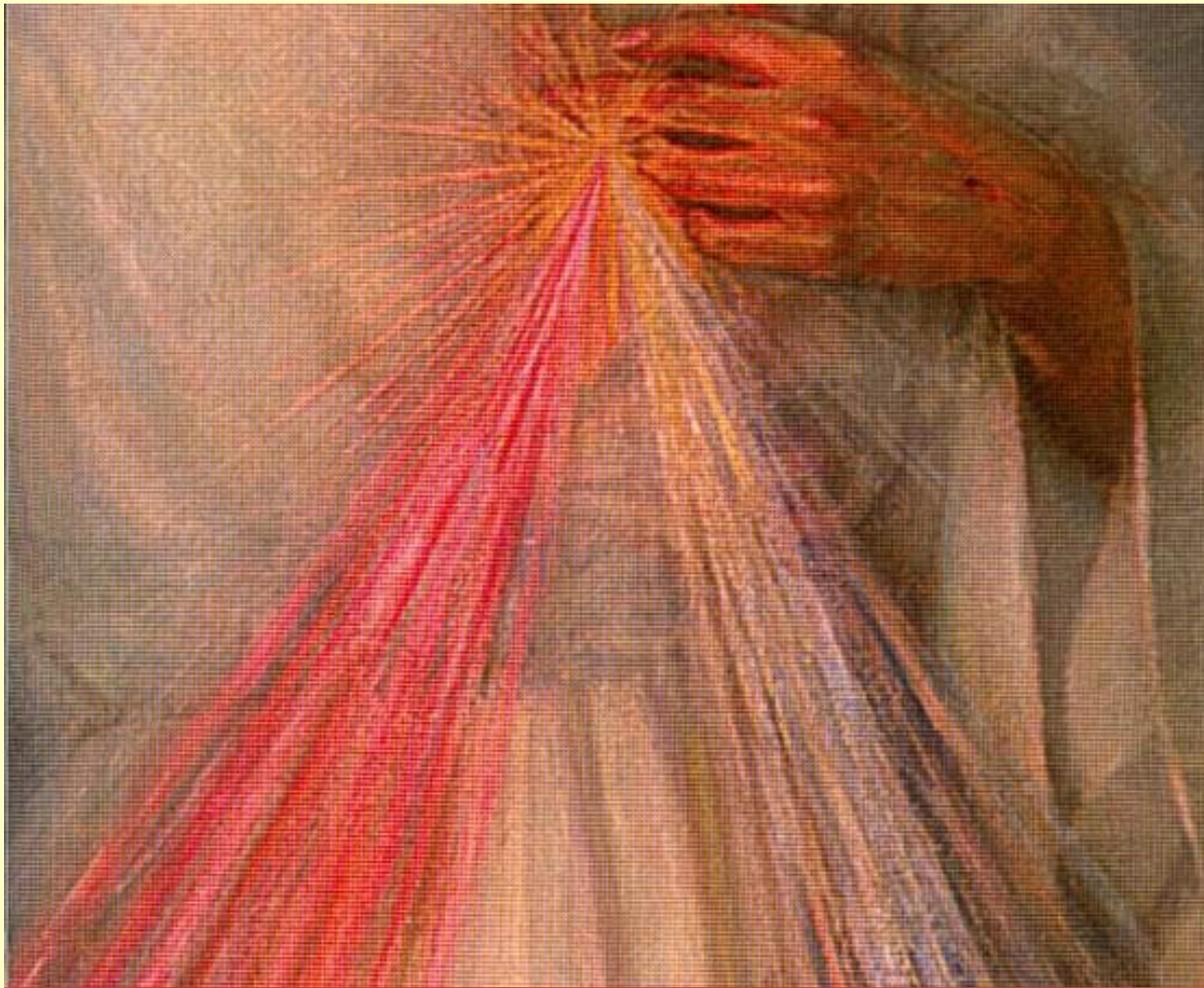


**The Lay Institute of Divine Mercy**  
**[www. divinemercury.opoka.org](http://www.divinemercury.opoka.org)**

The Lay Institute of Divine Mercy is one of the most active Apostolate of Divine Mercy. The Institute was established in Poland as the continuation of the research and study initiated by Fr. Michal Sopocko and has been in existence since 2002 in the USA, Russia and other Countries. The principal aim of the Lay Institute of Divine Mercy is to evangelize to make the Church a sign of the saving presence of God in the World, to strive for Christian perfection through trust in God and showing mercy towards one's neighbors, to get to know and proclaim the mystery of God's mercy, to support Catholic Missions around the world and to entreat God's mercy for the whole world. The Lay Institute together with the Publishing Office "Wybor" publishes the magazines "Czas Milosierdzia", monthly in Polish language and "Time of Mercy", quarterly in English language. In the series of the Library of Mercy the Institute published dozens of books from authors such as Archbishop Edward Ozorowski and the most valuable book of God's Servant Fr. Michael Sopocko entitled "Bo na wieki Milosierdzie Jego" ("For His Mercy Endures Forever").



Today, there is probably no country in the world where the image of the Merciful Jesus is not known; the chaplet to Divine Mercy is said even in various African dialects; since the year 2000, the first Sunday after Easter is being officially celebrated as the Divine Mercy Sunday in the entire Church; while the practice of prayer at the Hour of Mercy, that is, at the time of Jesus' death on the Cross (3 p.m.) is gaining ever greater popularity. In all those places where the devotion to Divine Mercy is being practiced, the tasks of the Apostolic Movement of the Divine Mercy are being undertaken to a greater or lesser degree. Today this Movement is made up of millions of people with different vocations. It includes people living behind papal enclosures, in active male and female congregations, or in secular institutes, and it involves diocesan priests and lay persons as well.

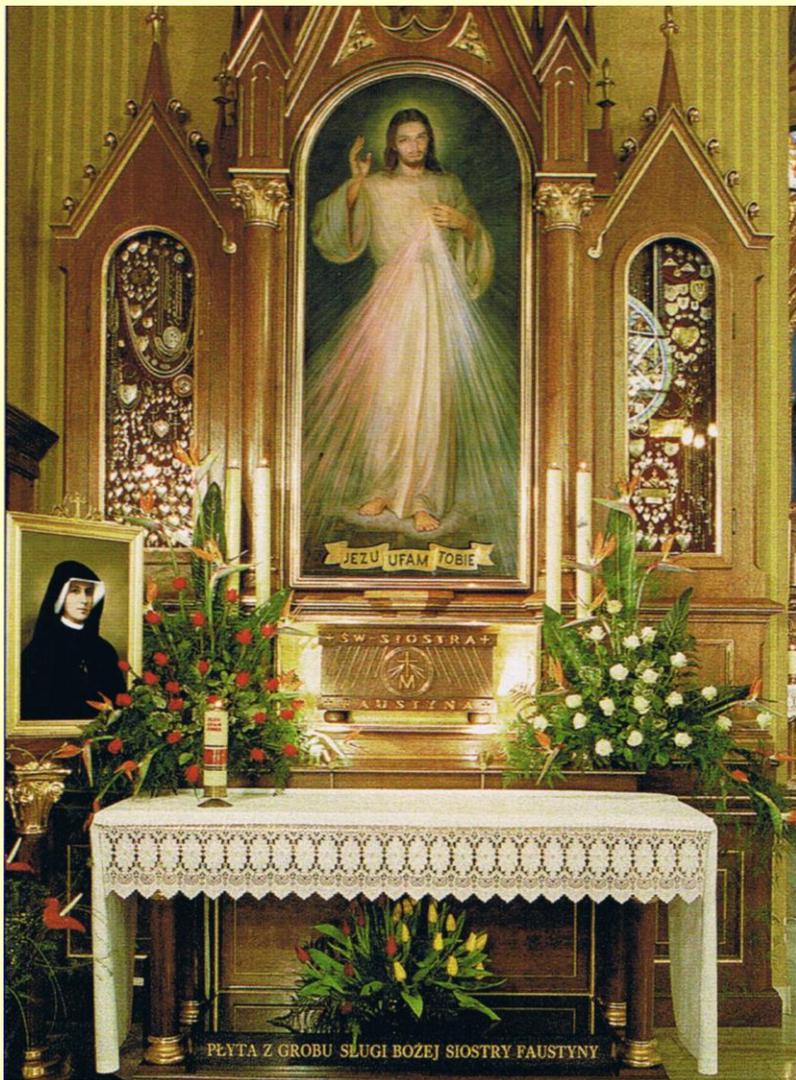


*The "Faustinum" Association*

# Origin

The *Faustinum* Association arises from the charisma of Saint Faustina of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. For a long time now, people have voiced their wish to partake in the work of St. Faustina under the supervision of her own Congregation. Thus, at the request of **the superior general of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, Mother Paulina Słomka, the Metropolitan of Krakow, Franciszek Cardinal Macharski, established the Faustinum Association of Apostles of the Divine Mercy on March 6, 1996.**





**The sacred Image of Merciful Jesus. The casket beneath the sacred Image contains the mortal remains of the “Secretary” and “Apostle” of Divine Mercy**

- After the statutes had been written, numerous consultations had taken place, and the *Faustinum* Association of Apostles of the Divine Mercy had been established on March 6, 1996.
- Pope John Paul II published his apostolic exhortation to consecrated persons, entitled *Vita Consecrata*, on March 25, that is, nearly 3 weeks later.

# What distinguishes *Faustinum* from other associations or communities of apostles of Divine Mercy

- *Faustinum* undertakes the mission of Saint Faustina in its "pure" and unadulterated form, without any mixtures or additions. In *Faustinum*, the spirituality and apostolic mission are the same as Saint Faustina's.
- *Faustinum* is a public, ecclesiastical association, possessing juridical personality. The *Code of Canon Law* also mentions private associations, which are approved by the Church, but these do not possess ecclesiastical juridical personality. The Metropolitan of Krakow approves the entire Board of the Association. The programmed activity of the *Faustinum* Association is conducted in communion with the Shepherds of the Krakow Church





*Faustinum* undertakes all the tasks of the Apostolic Movement of Divine Mercy, including that of striving for sanctity along the path marked out by Saint Faustina, proclaiming the message of Mercy, and entreating God's mercy for the whole world, particularly for

sinners; however, it focuses in a special way on spiritual and apostolic formation because only then can the above-mentioned tasks be completed well and fruitfully.



- The way of governing the Association is also anything but typical. Usually, the chief authority in associations is the general assembly of delegates, and the main executive organ is the Board. Whereas here it is quite the opposite: in the *Faustinum* Association, the Board is the chief authority, while the General Assembly of Delegates acts as an advisory body. This way of governance is the result of the specific character of the Association, whose members participate in the spirituality and apostolic mission of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. That is why a decisive role in the Association is played by the sisters who try to introduce persons from outside the Congregation into its spirituality and apostolic mission.

- Since it possesses ecclesiastical juridical personality, *Faustinum* may establish its communities in parishes and not only in connection with the convents belonging to the Congregation. In other words, the Association operates within the organizational structures of the Church.



- However, in order to establish a *Faustinum* community within a parish, there must be:
  - a minimum of 10 members (not volunteers),
  - suitable conditions to conduct the formation,
  - the permission of the bishop ordinary of the diocese
  - as well as the request of the pastor of a given parish.
- Both volunteers and members belong to the Association



A person who has enrolled in the *Faustinum* Association is a volunteer. A minor can also become a volunteer, on condition that he or she is able to fulfill the obligations which he takes on by enrolling. Among the obligations are the following:

- Coming to know God in the mystery of His mercy and responding to His considerate love with the attitude of trust, that is, by doing His will as expressed in the commandments, obligations of one's state in life, or the recognized inspirations of the Holy Spirit.
- Praying the chaplet to Divine Mercy,
- In the course of each day, performing at least one act of mercy towards neighbors out of love for Jesus, by deed, word, or prayer.



**World Sanctuary of Divine Mercy in Krakow**

After a year-long period of volunteer service, one may apply for membership. Out of a number of ways of striving for Christian perfection, members choose the one shown by Saint Faustina; they enter more deeply into her spirituality and apostolic mission; they become collaborators of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. However, it is not compulsory to apply for membership following a year-long volunteer service. One may remain a volunteer for one's entire life. It is important to discern well God's will in one's own life and to fulfill it faithfully.

# Formation



*The main emphasis in the Association's activity is placed on formation, which aims at introducing Faustinum members into the spirituality and apostolic mission of the Congregation in order to prepare the apostles of Divine Mercy to lead independent interior lives and properly understood apostolic work in the spirit of St. Faustina's charisma.*

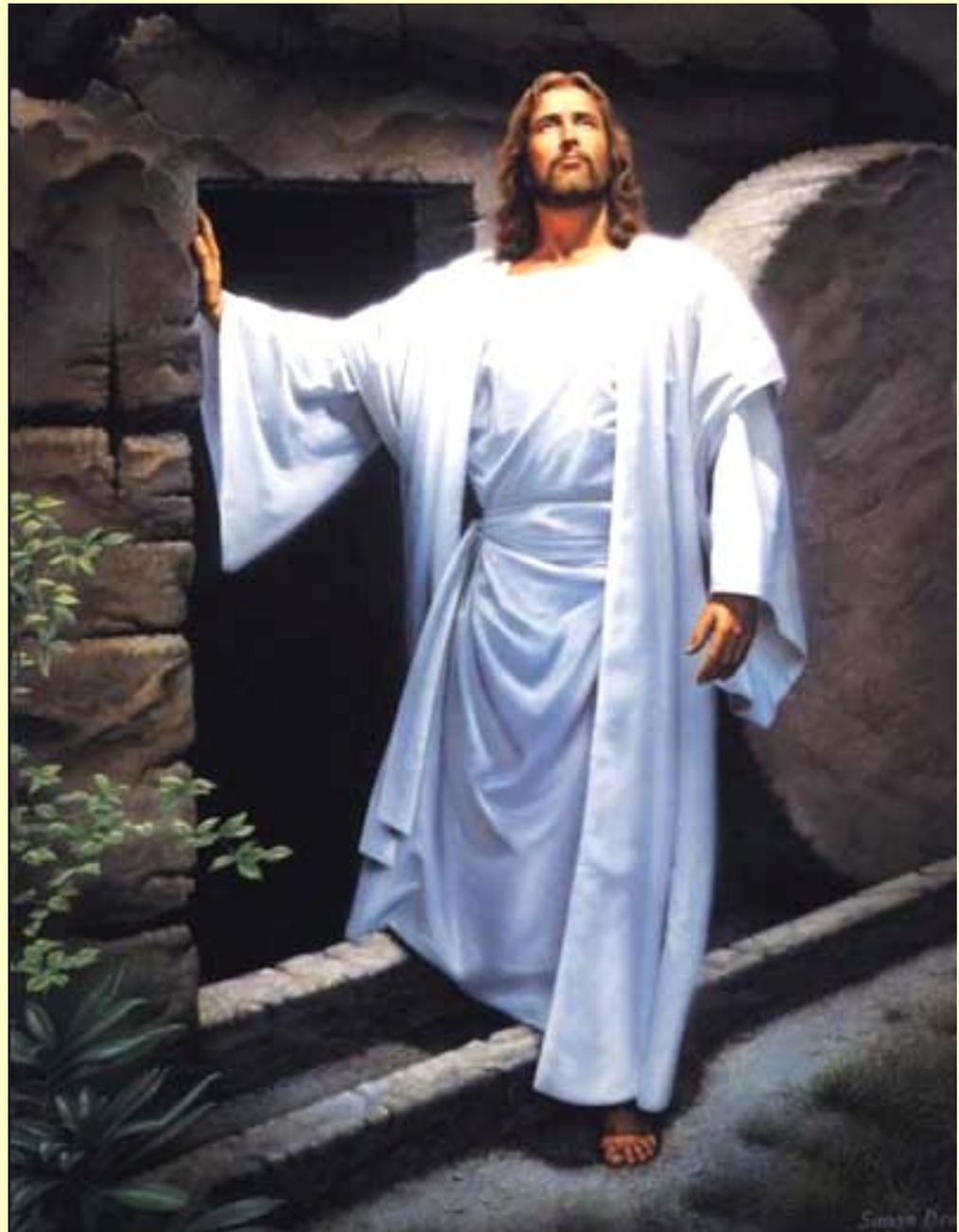
The basic formation program lasts 4 years and consists of 3 cycles:

- the biblical cycle,
- the interior life,
- and the spirituality and mission of Saint Faustina.



## Year I covers the foundations relating to:

- the mystery of Divine Mercy,
- the essence of interior life and the means leading to its development,
- as well as the spirituality and mission of Saint Faustina





Year II of the formation program focuses on the motto:

*In the School of Trust.*

Year III:

*The School of Mercy,*

Year IV:

*The School of Man's Cooperation with Divine Mercy.*

The individual topics are prepared on the basis of:

- Sacred Scripture,
- the teaching of the Church,
- and the *Diary* of St. Faustina.

Besides the monthly conferences and lectures, there is also a *Practice* exercise relating to the interior life. As they follow in the footsteps of St. Faustina, we suggest to those participating in the formation this *Practice* which consists in uniting with Jesus dwelling in their souls through a particular exclamatory prayer and for a specific intention relating to the topics discussed during the formation program. The *Practice* also includes literature which supplements the topics discussed during the conferences.



At present in the *Faustinum* Association, there are persons from over 50 countries in the world. The secretariat main office and Board of the Association is located at the Shrine of Divine Mercy in Krakow.



## Prayer to obtain graces through the intercession of Saint Faustina.

O Jesus, who filled Saint Faustina with profound veneration for Your boundless Mercy, deign, if it be Your holy will, to grant me, through her intercession, the grace for which I fervently pray...

My sins render me unworthy of Your Mercy, but be mindful of Sister Faustina's spirit of sacrifice and self-denial, and reward her virtue by granting the petition which, with childlike trust, I present to You through her intercession.

- Our Father...,
- Hail Mary...,
- Glory...

**Saint Faustina, pray for us.**



Presentation compiled by  
Fr. George J. Bobowski, Ph.D.

Translation and Cooperation  
Ms. Lelis Cruzata

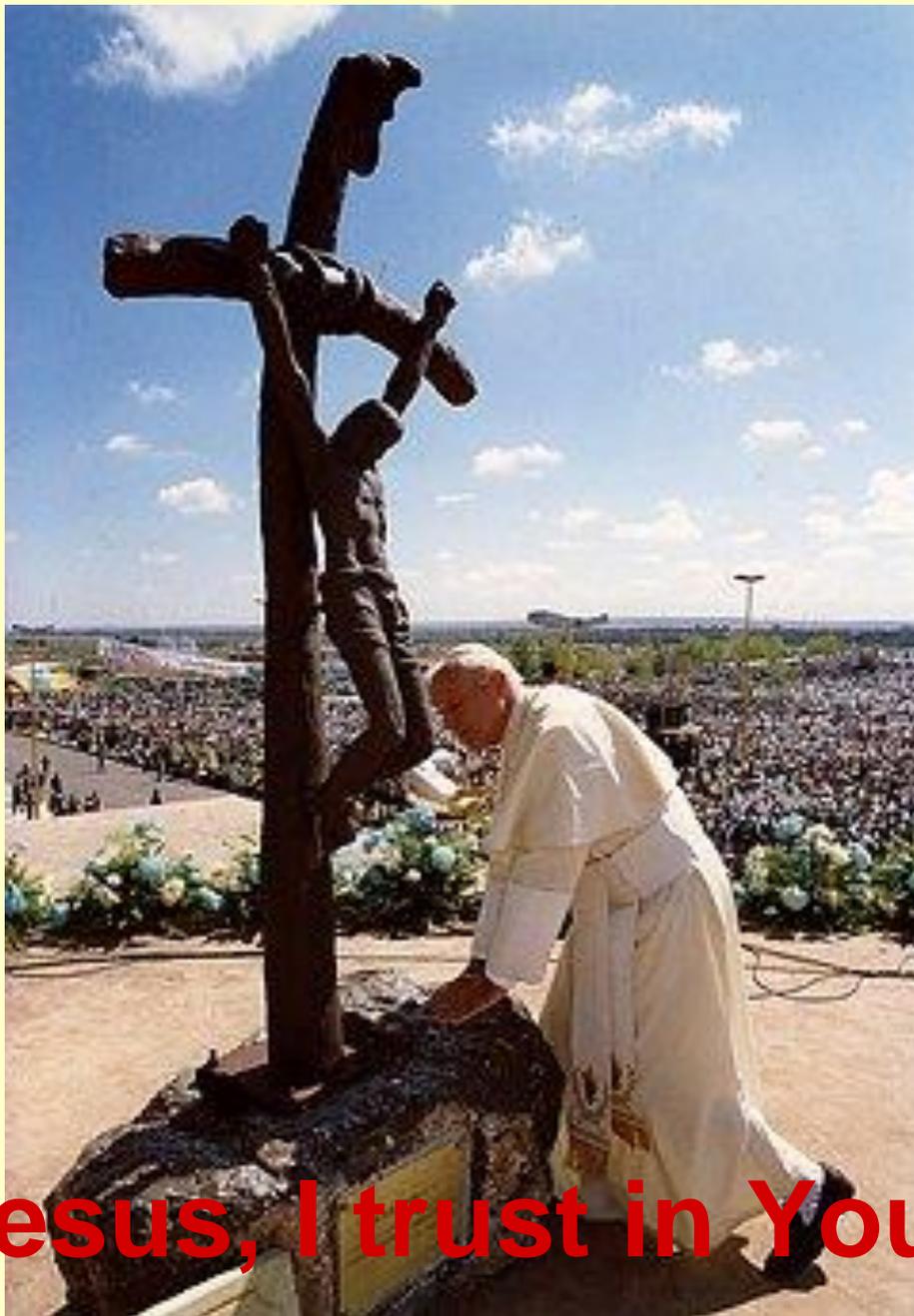
The Lay Institute of Divine Mercy  
[www. divinemercury.opoka.org](http://www.divinemercury.opoka.org)  
Telephone: 323/393-4144  
E-mail: [faustinum@aol.com](mailto:faustinum@aol.com)

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**Jesus, I trust in You**

God, merciful Father,  
in your Son, Jesus Christ,  
you have revealed your love  
and poured it out upon us  
in the Holy Spirit, the Comforter,  
We entrust to you today  
the destiny of the world and  
of every man and woman.

Bend down to us sinners,  
heal our weakness,  
conquer all evil,  
and grant that all the peoples  
of the earth may experience  
your mercy.  
In You, the Triune God,  
may they ever find the source of  
hope.

Eternal Father,  
by the Passion and Resurrection of  
your Son,  
have mercy on us and upon the  
whole world!

Amen.

*John Paul II*