



## ST. JOHN PAUL II LITURGICAL CENTER UPDATE

“The mystery of God’s merciful love was at the centre of the pontificate of my venerated predecessor.” This is the statement of Pope Benedict XVI during his Regina Caeli address, April 23, 2006. Indeed, St. John Paul II himself spoke about his special attachment to the Divine Mercy during his visit in 1997 to the Shrine of Divine Mercy in Poland:

“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 it in a sense forms the image of this Pontificate.”

We can illustrate it with some facts. Karol Wojtyla the first time heard about the revelations of Divine Mercy to Sr. Faustina Kowalska already in 1940, at the time when he was studying for the priesthood secretly, in a seminary in Krakow. As Archbishop of Krakow, he introduced Sr. Faustina’s name to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints for beatification. He also defended her credibility when the message of Divine Mercy was questioned in Rome. This came about due to a faulty translation in Italian of her diary, which was sent to the Congregation for the Protection of the Faith. As Pope John Paul II, he wrote his second encyclical letter on the Mercy of God (*Dives in Misericordia*). On April 18, 1993, which was the Second Sunday of Easter, in St. Peter’s Square he proclaimed her beatified. On April 30, 2000, which again was the Second Sunday of Easter, he canonized her and on the same occasion surprised the entire world by establishing the Second Sunday of Easter as the feast day of Divine Mercy for the entire Church.

You are welcome to read some excerpts below from his homily during Sr. Faustina’s canonization.

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### IN THE WORDS OF ST. JOHN PAUL II:

*Divine Mercy reaches human beings through the Heart of Christ crucified: “My daughter, say that I am love and mercy personified”, Jesus will ask Sr. Faustina (Diary, p. 374). Christ pours out this mercy on humanity through the sending of the Spirit who, in the Trinity, is the Person-Love. And is not mercy love’s “second name” (cf. *Dives in misericordia*, n. 7), understood in its deepest and most tender aspect, in its ability to take upon itself the burden of any need and, especially, in its immense capacity for forgiveness?*

*Today my joy is truly great in presenting the life and witness of Sr. Faustina Kowalska to the whole Church as a gift of God for our time. By divine Providence, the life of this humble daughter of Poland was completely linked with the history of the 20th century, the century we have just left behind. In fact, it was between the First and Second World Wars that Christ entrusted His message of mercy to her. Those who remember, who were witnesses and participants in the events of those years and the horrible sufferings they caused for millions of people, know well how necessary was the message of mercy.*

*Jesus told Sr. Faustina: “Humanity will not find peace until it turns trustfully to divine mercy” (Diary, p. 132). Through the work of the Polish religious, this message has become linked forever to the 20th century, the last of the second millennium and the bridge to the third. It is not a new message but can be considered a gift of special enlightenment that helps us to relive the Gospel of Easter more intensely, to offer it as a ray of light to the men and women of our time.*

*And you, Faustina, a gift of God to our time, a gift from the land of Poland to the whole Church, obtain for us an awareness of the depth of divine mercy; help us to have a living experience of it and to bear witness to it among our brothers and sisters. May your message of light and hope spread throughout the world, spurring sinners to conversion, calming rivalries and hatred and opening individuals and nations to the practice of brotherhood. Today, fixing our gaze with you on the face of the risen Christ, let us make our own your prayer of trusting abandonment and say with firm hope: Christ Jesus, I trust in you! Jezu, ufam tobie!*