

## FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



Of all the Catholic saints and theologians who have written about the merciful love of God, none has done so with more public and universal impact than Pope Saint John Paul II.

In 1993 he beatified Sister Faustina, stating in his homily: "Her mission continues and is yielding astonishing fruit. It is truly marvelous how her devotion to the merciful Jesus is spreading in our contemporary world, and gaining so many human hearts!"

In 2000 he canonized Sr. Faustina - making her the first canonized saint of the new millennium - and established "Divine Mercy Sunday" as a special title for the Octave Sunday of Easter for the universal Church.

In Lagiewniki, Poland in 2002, at the new Shrine of the Divine Mercy, the Holy Father consecrated the whole world to The Divine Mercy, saying: "I do so with the burning desire that the message of God's merciful love, proclaimed here through St. Faustina, may be made known to all the peoples of the earth, and fill their hearts with hope."

Finally, as Pope Benedict XVI pointed out, "Providence decided that he should die right on the eve of that day [Mercy Sunday] in the arms of Divine Mercy." Indeed, just before his death, Pope John Paul II received the Holy Communion of the anticipated Mass for Divine Mercy Sunday.

What many people do not realize, however, is that Pope John Paul's interest in St. Faustina and the message of Divine Mercy stretches back to the days of his youth. As a young college student in Krakow, he witnessed man's inhumanity to man during World War II in occupied Poland. He saw many people rounded up and sent to concentration camps and slave labor. In his hometown of Wadowice, he had many friends of the Jewish faith who would perish in the Holocaust. Death and danger surrounded the young Wojtyla. He experienced the need for God's mercy and humanity's need to be merciful to one another.

It was during this horrible period in human history that the young Karol Wojtyla decided to enter Cardinal Sapieha's clandestine seminary in Krakow. This decision further jeopardized his life, for he could be executed [by the Nazis] if caught. It was also during this time that another seminarian, Andrew Deskur, introduced Karol to the message of the Divine Mercy, as revealed to the mystic nun, now St. Maria Faustina Kowalska, the great suffering soul, who died at the age of 33 in 1938. St. Faustina wrote a diary entitled 'Divine Mercy in My Soul,' in which she recorded the revelations given to her by Jesus about the greatness of God's mercy. The message of God's mercy, as recorded by Sister Faustina, would be a beacon of light and hope for the people of Poland during this dark time in their history.

"In his years as a young priest, and later as Bishop and Archbishop of Krakow (now under the oppression of a Communist regime), Karol Wojtyla would reflect and meditate upon the message of God's mercy. He would often visit the convent in Lagiewniki where Sister Faustina was buried for private times of prayer, and to lead the sisters in reflective retreats.

This Sunday, Divine Mercy Sunday, we will have exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at 2:30pm, followed by the Divine Mercy Chaplet at 3:00pm

We can touch the wounds of Christ at Mass today, and also at the Divine Mercy Chaplet. It is in the wounds of Christ that we find evidence of his Resurrection.

Christ is Risen! He is Truly Risen, Alleluia!

Fr. Sean