



The Holy See

JOHN PAUL II

GENERAL AUDIENCE

Wednesday 21 August 2002

May the Message of God's Mercy bring peace to the world

1. Today I return in thought to the eighth journey to my native land, which happily divine Providence allowed me to complete in the last few days.

I renew my expression of gratitude to the President of the Republic of Poland, to the Prime Minister, to the Polish civil and military authorities of every order and rank, as well as those of the city of Kraków, for ensuring that my visit went smoothly. I also want to extend cordial thanks to the Primate, Cardinal Józef Glemp, to the Archbishop of Kraków, Cardinal Franciszek Macharski, to the entire episcopate, to the priests, consecrated persons and everyone who prepared this important ecclesial event, and took part in it with faith and devotion.

Above all I want to send my warmest thanks to my dear countrymen, for welcoming me in such great numbers with overwhelming affection and intense participation. The visit involved only one diocese, but in spirit I embraced the whole of Poland which, hopefully, will continue its effort to build true social progress, without ever neglecting to safeguard its own Christian identity.

2. "*God, rich in mercy*" (Eph 2,4). These words constantly resounded during my Apostolic Pilgrimage. Indeed, the main purpose of my visit was to proclaim once again God, "*rich in mercy*", especially by consecrating the new Shrine of Divine Mercy at Łagiewniki. The new church will be a centre spreading through the world the fire of God's mercy, according to what the Lord wished to manifest to St Faustina Kowalska, apostle of Divine Mercy.

"Jesus, I trust in you!". This is the simple prayer that Sr Faustina taught us, and which we can

have on our lips at every moment of our lives. How often, as a worker, a student and then as a priest and bishop, in the difficult periods of the history of Poland, I also repeated this simple and profound aspiration and experience its efficacy and power.

Mercy is one of the most wonderful attributes of the Creator and of the Redeemer; the Church lives to bring humanity to this inexhaustible wellspring, of which she is depository and dispenser. This is why I wished to entrust my homeland, the Church and all humanity to the Divine Mercy.

3. God's merciful love opens the heart to concrete acts of charity for one's neighbour. This was true for [Archbishop Zygmunt Szczesny Felinski](#), [Fr Jan Beyzym](#), [Sr Santia Szymkowiak](#) and [Fr Jan Balicki](#), whom I had the joy of beatifying during the Mass celebrated in Błonie Park in Kraków last Sunday.

I wanted to hold up to the Christian people these new Blesseds, so that their example and words might be a stimulus and encouragement to witness with deeds to the Lord's merciful love who conquers evil with good (cf. Rom 12, 21). Only in this way is it possible to build the hoped-for civilization of love, whose gentle force is in strident contrast with the "mystery of evil" that is present in the world. To us, disciples of Christ, is given the mission to proclaim and live the lofty mystery of Divine Mercy which regenerates the world, compelling us to love our brothers and sisters and even our enemies. These *beati*, together with the other saints, are brilliant examples of how the "creativity in charity", of which I spoke in my Apostolic Letter [Novo Millennio ineunte](#), brings us close to and puts us in solidarity with all who suffer (cf. n. 50), architects of a world renewed by love.

4. My pilgrimage then took me to Kalwaria Zebrzydowska to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the shrine dedicated to the Passion of Jesus and to our Lady of Sorrows. I have been attached to that holy place since childhood. I often experienced there how the Mother of God, Our Lady of Grace, turns her merciful eyes to afflicted humanity, in need of her wisdom and help.

After Czestochowa, it is one of the better known and visited shrines of Poland to which the faithful come even from the countries nearby. After travelling the paths of the *Way of the Cross* and of the *Compassion of the Mother of God*, the pilgrims pause to pray before the ancient and miraculous image of Mary, our Advocate, who welcomes them with eyes filled with love. Beside her, one can perceive and understand the mysterious bond between the "suffering" (*pati*) Redeemer on Calvary and his "co-suffering" (*compati*) Mother at the foot of the Cross. In this communion of love in suffering it is easy to discern the source of the power of intercession which the prayer of the Virgin Mary has for us, her children.

Let us ask Our Lady to kindle in our hearts the spark of the grace of God and to help us transmit to the world the fire of Divine Mercy. May Mary obtain for all people the gift of unity and peace: unity of faith, unity of spirit and of thought, unity of families; peace of hearts, peace of nations and of the

world, while we wait for Christ to return in glory.

I am pleased to welcome the Irish pilgrims from the Diocese of Killaloe. My greeting also goes to the visitors from the Bunri Satoh Educational Institute in Saitama, Japan. Upon all the English-speaking visitors present at today's Audience, especially those from England, Ireland, Japan and Indonesia, I cordially invoke God's blessings of grace and peace.