

Be ready to bear Witness to the Cause of Man

*Homily of the Holy Father Saint John Paul II
Błonie, Kraków, 18 August 2002*

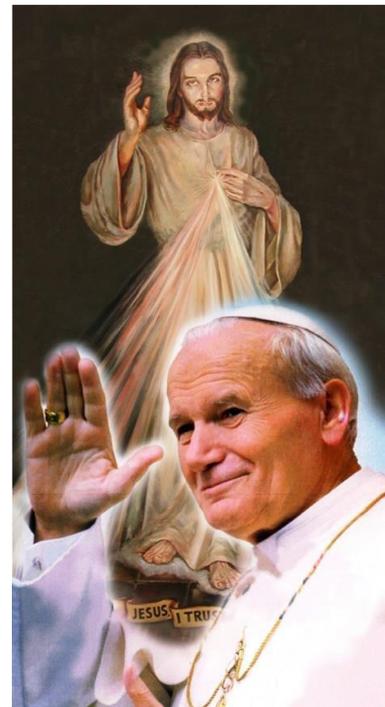
"God, rich in mercy". This phrase in a way captures the entire truth about the love of God which has redeemed humanity. "God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ" (Eph 2:4-5). The fullness 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!

Once we recognize this truth, we become aware that Christ's call to love others even as he has loved us calls all of us to that same measure. We feel in some sense impelled to make our lives a daily offering by showing mercy to our brothers and sisters, drawing upon the gift of God's merciful love. We realize that God, in showing us mercy, calls upon us to become witnesses to mercy in today's world. (...)

From the beginning of her existence the Church, pointing to the mystery of the Cross and the Resurrection, has preached the mercy of God, a pledge of hope and a source of salvation for man. Nonetheless, it would appear that we today have been particularly called to proclaim this message before the world. We cannot neglect this mission, if God himself has called us to it through the testimony of Saint Faustina.

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.

The message of merciful love needs to resound forcefully anew. The world needs this love. The hour has come to bring Christ's message to everyone: to rulers and the oppressed, to those whose humanity and dignity seem lost in the *mysterium iniquitatis*. **The hour has come when the message of Divine Mercy is able to fill hearts with hope and to become the spark of a new civilization: the civilization of love.**



The Church desires tirelessly to proclaim this message, not only by convincing words, but by the ready practice of mercy. This is why she ceaselessly holds up stupendous examples of individuals who out of love for God and for man "went forth and bore fruit".

(...) "When we are strong with the Spirit of God, we are also strong with faith in man — strong with faith, hope and love, which are inseparable — and we are ready to bear witness to the cause of man before those who really have this cause at heart" (Homily at Mass at Błonie Kraskow, June 10, 1979). Therefore, I asked you: "Never disdain charity, which is 'the greatest of these' and which shows itself in the Cross. Without it, human life has no roots and no meaning" (ibid., 5).

Brothers and Sisters, today I repeat this invitation: open yourselves to God's greatest gift, to his love that, through the Cross of Christ, has revealed itself to the world as merciful love. Today, living in different times, at the dawn of the new century and millennium, continue to be "ready to bear witness to the cause of man". Today, with all my strength, I beseech the sons and daughters of the Church, and all people of good will: never, ever separate "the cause of man" from the love of God. Help modern men and women to experience God's merciful love! This love, in its splendor and warmth, will save humanity!