

Seventeenth Southern California Congress of Divine Mercy RAYS OF MERCIFUL LOVE

What is the Shrine of the Divine Mercy and its Purpose?
October 14 – 15, 2023

CHRIST THE KING ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

617 N. Arden Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90004
www.ctk-la.org

THE LAY INSTITUTE OF DIVINE MERCY

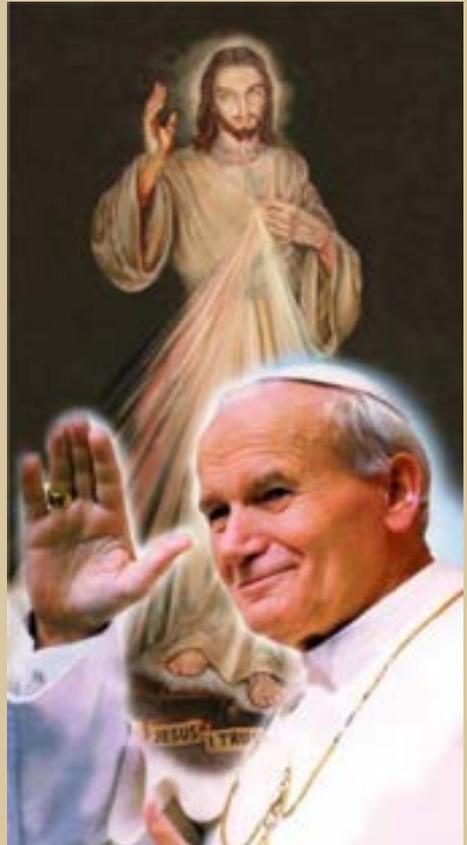
Tel: (323)449-9014; Tel: (323)449-9016
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**October 14, 2023,
at Christ the King Church**

**DEDICATION
OF THE ARCHDIOCESAN
DIVINE MERCY SHRINE
By Archbishop Jose H. Gomez**

**IN THE CHURCH
OF CHRIST THE KING
there is a special chapel
dedicated to the Divine Mercy**

THIS AMAZING IMAGE of Merciful Jesus travelled all the way from Poland, St. Faustina's country, through the Vatican, and arrived here in Hollywood. This image of Divine Mercy is one of the contemporary copies of the countenance known through Saint Faustina's revelations. The image enjoys a unique status since Saint John Paul II blessed and inscribed his initials on it on April 30, 2003, in Vatican.





As a Pastor of Christ the King Parish in Hollywood I warmly welcome you to the Seventeenth Southern California Congress of Divine Mercy.

Christ the King Parish is home to the Image of Merciful Jesus blessed and signed by Saint John Paul II and enthroned in the Chapel of Divine Mercy since September 13, 2003.

On October 14, 2023, Archbishop Jose H. Gomez solemnly establish the Archdiocesan Sanctuary of Divine Mercy in the Parish of Christ the King in Hollywood. This is a boundless joy and God's blessing not only for us but for the entire Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

The main topic of the Congress is: RAYS OF MERCIFUL LOVE. What is the Shrine of the Divine Mercy and its Purpose? Each sanctuary has its own specific character, shaped by the object of worship - each also plays a significant role in the life of the parish community and the inhabitants of the entire region. The Shrine of the Divine Mercy is an important center of worship of the Divine Mercy – The Highest Attribute of God. All the faithful: the elderly, married couples, young people, children, sick people, worshipers of Divine Mercy are encouraged to make pilgrimages to this holy place that God is pleased with.

Let me repeat after Saint John Paul II: "I firmly believe that this new sanctuary will always be a place where people will come before God in Spirit and truth. They will come with the trust which accompanies all those who humbly open their hearts to the working of God's merciful love, to that love which is stronger than even the greatest sin. Here, in the fire of divine love, human hearts will burn with desire for conversion, and whoever looks for hope will find comfort." (Saint John Paul II, Homily, August 17, 2002, Krakow)

Your participation in The Dedication of the Divine Mercy Sanctuary and in this congress expresses your devotion to Jesus the King of Mercy and your willingness to bring souls to the fountain of His Mercy, which is the only answer to the troubled world.

Jesus, I Trust in you

Fr. Juan J. Ochoa
Pastor of Christ the King Parish
Rector of Archdiocesan Divine Mercy Shrine

On the Mercy of God

A Spiritual Meditation from the Writings of St. Junipero Serra

O Lord, You are complete mercy, complete love,
and complete tenderness toward all men and women,
even toward the most ungrateful sinners.
You wish all people to attain the ends
for which You compassionately created us.
You yearn that we might believe
that You are the Way, the Truth, and the Life,
and advance toward the salvation You will for us.
You are sweet and gentle,
and You call us in the gentleness of Your divine voice,
in the sweet and gentle tones of a Father
addressing his favorite child.
You extend the golden bonds of Your goodwill and love,
You pardon us in your mercy.
Father of all mercy and consolation,
pour forth the abundance of Your love with mercy.
By your mercy, conquer every type of malice.
Help us to leave not only our faults,
but the bad habits and situations in our lives which lead to these faults,
that we might love You alone.
Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening with a contrite heart.
Help us to begin right now to realize the truth!
To be entirely animated by love of You,
Help us begin to live a holy life,
with a burning love and zeal for the salvation of our neighbors.
Make us more gentle, more calm,
more nurturing and strong.
Remind us of Your gentle goodwill, O Lord.
May we never be severe or harsh.
May we see in everyone, a child whom You have created and
redeemed with the most precious blood of Your Son.
Teach us to know that You value kindness,
that love is the best way to attract people to You.
May we always help others to taste and see
the sweetness and gentleness of Your love.
Let us bear every hardship

for the love of You and the salvation of souls.
In our trials, may we know that we are loved as Your own children.
To a willing heart all is sweet,
so grant us love and patience, and
conform us always to Your will, O God.
We entrust ourselves to the
Ever-Immaculate Queen Mary
and say with the Angel, Hail Mary.

*Compiled by Most Reverend José H. Gomez,
Archbishop of Los Angeles
July 1, 2020*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As you venerate this image of Jesus of Divine Mercy, may you find solace in the knowledge that His mercy knows no bounds and His forgiveness is ever-present. May you be reminded that no sin is too great to be embraced by His mercy, and no heart is beyond His reach. In moments of doubt or struggle, remember that the Divine Mercy is a source of healing and renewal. Just as the sun rises each day, His mercy is renewed without fail. Let His mercy flow through you, offering kindness and understanding to others, and bringing healing to the wounds of our world. May you carry the message of Divine Mercy in your heart, sharing it with those in need and



extending forgiveness and love to those around you. Embrace each day as a reminder of the incredible gift of God's mercy, and let it inspire you to live with compassion, gratitude, Trust and a spirit of reconciliation. May Jesus of Divine Mercy illuminate your path, guide your actions, and fill your life with hope and grace.

Jesus, I Trust in You
Jesús, en Ti Confío
Jezu, ufam Tobie

*Fr. Juan J. Ochoa
Rector of Archdiocesan Divine Mercy Shrine*

In the Church, everything is the time of Mercy

This was an intuition of Bl. John Paul II. He “sensed” that this was the time of mercy. We think of the Beatification and Canonization of Sr Faustina Kowalska; then he introduced the Feast of Divine Mercy. Little by little he advanced and went forward on this.

*Address of Pope Francis to the Parish Priests,
March 6, 2014*



“The act of Jesus by which He raised Lazarus demonstrates the end to which the power of the Grace of God can arrive, and the end, therefore to which our conversion, our change can arrive. But listen well: there is no other limit to the divine mercy offered to all! There is no other limit to the divine mercy offered to all! Remember this phrase. And we can all say it together: ‘There is no other limit to the divine mercy offered to all! The Lord is always ready to take away the tombstone of our sins, which separate us from Him, the light of the living.’”

Pope Francis, Angelus, April 6, 2014

Mercy is the heart of the Gospel

For me, mercy is the mission of every Christian and the mission of the Church. The Church exists to evangelize – and the mercy of God is always the “content” of evangelization. Mercy is God’s revelation to us; it is the good news the Church proclaims.

That has been my vision for the family of God here in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles [...].

I want us to be a Church that evangelizes – a Church that bears witness to God’s mercy in everything we do. A Church that shares God’s love and makes it real for every person in our society.

The five pastoral priorities I have set out are all aspects of this one mission of mercy – teaching about God, inspiring vocations, serving families, building the identity of the family of God, defending the sanctity of life and the dignity of the human person. All of these priorities help us to become a people of mercy and a Church of mercy. Mercy is the heart of the Gospel and we must make it the heart of our identity as Christians.

*Archbishop José H. Gomez
The mission of mercy, April 14, 2015*



Seventeenth Southern California Congress of Divine Mercy

Dedication of the Archdiocesan Shrine of the Divine Mercy

by Archbishop Jose H. Gomez

October 14, 2023, at Christ the King Parish

RAYS OF MERCIFUL LOVE

What is the Shrine of the Divine Mercy and its Purpose?

CONGRESS SCHEDULE

SATURDAY – OCTOBER 14, 2023 – DEDICATION OF THE DIVINE MERCY SHRINE

8:00 AM Congress Check-In & Registration

9:00 AM Opening/Welcome Remarks & Invocation (Bilingual) – Fr. Juan Ochoa

9:30 AM – 10:30 AM Conference: What is the Shrine of Divine Mercy and its Purpose?

Speaker: Msgr. Charles J. Chafman

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM Conference: The image of Merciful Jesus and its Meaning

Speaker: His Excellency Bishop Slawomir Szkredka

12:00 PM Lunch Break

1:30 PM - 2:30 PM Conference: Everything is the Work of God's Mercy. Icon of Merciful Jesus at Christ the King Church in Hollywood.

Speakers: Fr. John-Paul Gonzalez and Fr. George J. Bobowski

3:00 PM The Hour of Great Mercy – 3:00 O'clock Prayer (Bilingual)

Presider: Msgr. Paul M. Montoya

3:30 PM Mercy in Deeds and Offertory (Bilingual)

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Penance Service

5:30 PM Solemn Mass

Dedication of the Archdiocesan Divine Mercy Shrine

By His Excellency Archbishop Jose H. Gomez

SUNDAY – OCTOBER 15, 2023

10:30 AM Solemn Holy Mass

12:00 PM Lunch Break

12:30 PM Solemn Holy Mass (Spanish)

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM Conference: Rays of Merciful Love. Everybody is Welcome to the Shrine.

Speaker: Fr. Juan Ochoa

3:00 PM The Hour of Great Mercy (Bilingual)

Presider: Fr. Chidi Ekpendu

– Chaplet of Divine Mercy

– Reflection: "Toward a New Imagination of Mercy"

– Stations of the Cross with the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

– Veneration of the Relics of St. Faustina, St. John Paul II, Bl. Michael Sopoćko and St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe

4:30 PM Closing Remarks: Personal Experiences and Testimonies.

Decimoséptimo Congreso de la Divina Misericordia del Sur de California

Dedicación del Santuario Arquidiocesano de la Divina Misericordia por el Arzobispo José H. Gómez

14 de Octubre 2023, en la parroquia de Christ the King

RAYOS DE AMOR MISERICORDIOSO

¿Qué es el Santuario de la Divina Misericordia
y cuál es su Propósito?

CALENDARIO DEL CONGRESO

SÁBADO – 14 DE OCTUBRE DE 2023 – DEDICACIÓN DEL SANTUARIO DE LA DIVINA MISERICORDIA

8:00 AM Registro para el Congreso

9:00 AM Palabras de apertura / bienvenida e invocación (bilingüe) - Padre Juan Ochoa

9:30 AM – 10:30 AM Conferencia: ¿Qué es el Santuario de la Divina Misericordia y cuál es su propósito?

Orador: Padre Juan Ochoa

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM Conferencia: Todo es la Obra de la Misericordia de Dios. Icono de Jesús Misericordioso en la Iglesia de Christ the King en Hollywood

Orador: Diácono Ricardo Villacorta

12:00 PM Almuerzo

1:30 PM - 2:30 PM Conferencia: La Imagen de Jesús Misericordioso y su significado

Orador: Su Excelencia Obispo Sławomir Szkrędek

3:00 PM La Hora de la Gran Misericordia – Oración de las 3:00 en punto (Bilingüe)

Preside el Mons. Paul Montoya

3:30 PM Misericordia en Obras y Ofertorio (Bilingüe)

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM Adoración del Santísimo Sacramento y Servicio de penitencia

5:30 PM Misa solemne

Dedicación del Santuario de la Divina Misericordia

Por Su Excelencia Arzobispo José H. Gómez

DOMINGO – 15 DE OCTUBRE DE 2023

10:30 AM Santa Misa Solemne

12:00 PM Almuerzo

12:30 PM Santa Misa Solemne (Español)

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM Conferencia: Rayos de Amor Misericordioso. Todos son bienvenidos al Santuario.

Orador: Padre Louie Reyes

3:00 PM La Hora de la Gran Misericordia (Bilingüe)

Preside el Padre Chidi Ekpendu

– Coronilla de la Divina Misericordia

– Reflexión – „Hacia una nueva imaginación de la misericordia”

– Vía Crucis con el Santísimo Sacramento y Bendición del Santísimo Sacramento

– Veneración de las Reliquias de St. Faustina, St. Juan Pablo II, Bl. Miguel Sopoćko y St. Maximiliano María Kolbe

4:30 PM Palabras de clausura: Experiencias personales y testimonios.

Everything is the work of GOD'S MERCY

Saint Faustina Kowalska accidentally was a witness of a group of people talking aimlessly, she wrote in her Diary: "My Jesus, how little these people talk about You. They talk about everything but You, Jesus. And if they talk so little [about You], it is quite probable that they do not think about You at all. The whole world interests them; but about You, their Creator, there is silence. Jesus, I am sad to see this great indifference and ingratitude of creatures. O my Jesus, I want to love You for them and to make atonement to You, by my love." (*Diary* 804)

To pray, because others do not pray, to pray for those who do not pray – it is especially pleasing to God. The same way it pleases God all efforts made to reach out with His word, there, where generally it is not designed to provide room for Him.

Since 1980's, in the worldwide known place of entertainment, capital of the movies, world-famous Hollywood, known as a vanity fair, the Devotion to the Divine Mercy is continuously spreading.

In the Parish of Christ the King, the devotion to Divine Mercy has been present since the times of our former pastor Msgr. Alexander George. The Divine Mercy Chaplet was prayed lead by one of the deacons (Deacon Art) in the 1980s. At the end of 1995 the Nuval family, through their personal ministry, under the supervision of Father Sal Pilato, then Associate Pastor, prayed the Divine Mercy Chaplet with the school children, at the School Children's Mass, and donated Divine Mercy images for the school classrooms and one image for the school, which now is displayed in the School hall way. In 1997 the Divine Mercy Novena was also prayed.

These events show us now, how since the 1980s Jesus of Divine Mercy has been present in our parish Christ the King, and in the year 2000, in the year of the Jubilee, the canonization of Saint Faustina and the proclamation of the celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday in the whole church and the whole world by Saint John Paul II, the Divine Mercy Devotion and the Divine Mercy Ministry was formally implemented in Christ the King Parish in Los Angeles in the Hollywood and Hancock Park Areas.



The teaching of John Paul II is an important element of the devotion in the parish community, especially among the devotees to God's Mercy. In the Encyclical Letter "Dives in Misericordia", which is very often studied by Parishioners (formation), the Holy Father wrote: "The Church of our time, constantly pondering the eloquence of these inspired words, and

applying them to the sufferings of the great human family, must become more particularly and profoundly conscious of the need to bear witness in her whole mission to God's mercy, following in the footsteps of the tradition of the Old and the New Covenant, and above all of Jesus Christ Himself and His Apostles. The Church must bear witness to the mercy of God revealed in Christ, in the whole of His mission as Messiah, professing it in the first place as a salvific truth of faith and as necessary for a life in harmony with faith, and then seeking to introduce it and to make it incarnate in the lives both of her faithful and as far as possible in the lives of all people of good will.



Finally, the Church – professing mercy and remaining always faithful to it – has the right and the duty to call upon the mercy of God, imploring it in the face of all the manifestations of physical and moral evil, before all the threats that cloud the whole horizon of the life of humanity today.” (*Dives in Misericordia*, VII)

The Pastor, Father Antonio Cacciapuoti, with the assistance of Fr. George J. Bobowski and his parishioners, took various measures to spread the Devotion to the Divine Mercy through annual congresses, monthly formation, celebration of the Feast of Divine Mercy and prayers. Guests from around the world: Poland, Philippines and Russia were invited as speakers. Archbishop Kondrusiewicz from Belarus, Bishop Bacani from the Philippines, Fr. Simon Stefanowicz, O.S.P.P.E from Czestochowa and others. Specially from Bialystok – City of Mercy, Poland, Archbishop Stanislaw Szymecki and Bishop Professor Edward Ozorowski were present. Bishop Ozorowski had a series of homilies and lectures, answered questions asked by parishioners. The answers were published by Oficyna Wydawnicza “Wybor” in a separate book “Dialogues on Divine Mercy” in the series of Library of Mercy. The Library of Mercy was initiated under the supervision of Archbishop Edward Ozorowski, Monsignor Zenon Jarzabek from the Vatican Congregation for the Clergy, Fr. George J. Bobowski, Director of the Lay Institute of Divine Mercy, Ewa Bobowska President of the Editorial House “Wybor” and Lelis Cruzata, Moderator of “Faustinum” Association of the Apostles of Divine Mercy and Divine Mercy Ministry at Christ the King Parish. Since 2006 The Library of the Lay Institute of Divine Mercy published over 10 books and many other publications.

In the parish of Christ the King, the Devotion to the Divine Mercy became very prominent. In the Parish there were organized congresses

of the Divine Mercy, there were brought and placed in the Church the paintings of Saint Faustina and Father Michael Sopocko. In 2006, Father Antonio Cacciapuoti, Father George J. Bobowski and Father, John-Paul Gonzalez and Ms. Lelis Cruzata convoked the First Southern California Congress of Divine Mercy at Christ



the King Parish which took place on April 28 to April 30, 2006, at Christ the King Parish. The first to respond to the call were the parishioners of Christ the King, supported by the Lay Institute of Divine Mercy and One Heart One Mind in Christ Community with Mrs. Rosalind Diego. The annual Congress at Christ the King gathers hundreds of faithful Catholics throughout the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. "To entrust the world to Divine Mercy... the message of God's Merciful love proclaimed through Saint Faustina, may be made known to all the people of the earth... May the binding promise of the Lord Jesus be fulfilled: from here must go forth, the spark which will prepare the world for His final coming". (Homily of Pope John Paul II, Krakow, 2002) There are prayers, devotion to the Divine Mercy, but above all there are so many efforts to ensure that the people will have in their hearts the truth, that God is merciful to them.

This very new center of devotion to the Divine Mercy has made a considerable contribution to the spreading of devotion to the Divine Mercy – the Highest Attribute of God. The devotion to the Divine Mercy occupies an important place in the ministry of the Priests serving at Christ the King Parish. Divine Mercy is a way of Life for the parishioners.

It was God's Will to bring the Devotion to His Mercy to Hollywood. Now is the Time of Mercy, Divine Mercy. This is the time to bring God's mercy to all, and I am grateful to those who supported this idea from the beginning, to those who helped me share the time of Divine Mercy with the faithful in Los Angeles.

First, we need to give thanks to Merciful Jesus who allowed us to be instruments of His mercy. Our gratitude and thanks to all the Priests and Deacons serving at Christ the King Parish in Los Angeles, who continuously spread the Divine Mercy in their community. We need to remember all of them: Msgr. Alexander George, Msgr. Antonio Cacciapuoti, Msgr. Paul M. Montoya, Fr. Jaun J. Ochoa, Msgr. Charles Chaffman, Fr. John-Paul Gonzalez, Fr. Chidi U. Ekpendu, Fr. Louie Rayes, Dn. Ricardo Villacorta, Dn. Marco Antonio Garcia, Dn. Felix Rack, Dn. Rene Burgos.

Thanks to the parishioners of Christ the King Roman Catholic Parish who embraced Divine Mercy in this specific place. Especially our thanks to the members of the Parish Divine Mercy Ministry and the “Faustinum” Members.

Although Sister Faustina lived in Poland, we find so many devoted people to the Divine Mercy here in Los Angeles. I believe that the Shrine of Divine Mercy at Christ the King Parish, is not only a place of solace, prayers and contemplation of Divine Mercy – the most important truth of our faith, in the “Noisy” Hollywood, but also the steps to heaven, where we will always venerate God in His Mercy.

In 2019 Father Juan Ochoa become Administrator of Christ the King Parish, and 2021 he was installed as the pastor of our Parish. From the beginning of his ministry, Father Juan embraced the Devotion to Divine Mercy and committed himself to have declared Christ the King Church as the Archdiocese Sanctuary of Divine Mercy. And our dream, the work of all Parishioners becomes reality. October 14, 2023, Archbishop Jose H. Gomez declared the Archdiocesan Shrine of Divine Mercy at Christ the King

*Divine Mercy Ministry
at Christ the King Parish*

Todo es Obra de la MISERICORDIA de DIOS

Santa Sor Faustina, siendo testigo accidental de un grupo de personas que hablaban sin rumbo, escribió en su Diario: “De todo menos de Ti, Jesús. Y si hablan poco, seguramente no pensarán nada; se ocupan del mundo entero, pero acerca de Ti, oh, Creador, el silencio. Me pongo triste, oh, Jesús, al ver esta inmensa indiferencia e ingratitud de las criaturas. Oh, Jesús mío, deseo amarte por ellos y compensarte con mi amor.” (*Diario* 804)

Orar, porque otros no oran, orar por aquellos que no oran, es especialmente agradable a Dios. De la misma manera, agrada a Dios todos los esfuerzos que se hacen para alcanzar con su palabra, allí donde, por lo general, no está diseñada para darle lugar.

Desde la década de 1980, en el lugar de entretenimiento conocido por el mundo, como capital de las películas, el famoso Hollywood, que es como una feria de vanidad, la Devoción a la Divina Misericordia se está extendiendo continuamente

En la Parroquia de Christ the King, la devoción a la Divina Misericordia ha estado presente desde los tiempos de nuestro Pastor anterior, Padre Alexander George. La Coronilla a la Divina Misericordia fue rezada en los años 80s bajo la guía de uno de los Diáconos de ese tiempo (Diáconos Art) A finales del año 1995 la familia Nuval, a través de su Ministerio personal, bajo la supervisión del Padre Sal Pilato, el Pastor asociado de ese entonces, rezaron la Coronilla a la Divina Misericordia con los niños de la escuela en la Misa para los Niños y donaron Imágenes de Jesús Misericordioso para

los salones de clase y una para la escuela, la cual ahora está expuesta en el pasillo de la escuela.

En 1997 the Divine Mercy Novena was also prayed.

Estos acontecimientos nos muestran ahora, como desde los 1980's Jesús de la Divina Misericordia ha estado presente en nuestra parroquia de Christ the King. Y en el año 2000, el año del Jubileo, la canonización de Santa Faustina y la proclamación de la Celebración del Domingo de la Divina Misericordia en toda la iglesia y el mundo entero por San Juan Pablo II en Abril del año 2000; La Devoción a la Divina Misericordia y el Ministerio de la Divina Misericordia ha sido formalmente establecida en la Parroquia de Christ the King en Los Ángeles, en el área de Hollywood y Hancock Park.

La enseñanza de Juan Pablo II es un elemento importante de la devoción en la comunidad parroquial, especialmente entre los devotos a la Misericordia de Dios. En la Encíclica "Dives in Misericordia", muy frecuentemente estudiada por los feligreses, el Santo Padre escribió: "Conservando siempre en el corazón la elocuencia de estas palabras inspiradas y aplicándolas a las experiencias y sufrimientos propios de la gran familia humana, es menester que la Iglesia de nuestro tiempo adquiera conciencia más honda y concreta de la necesidad de dar testimonio de la misericordia de Dios en toda su misión, siguiendo las huellas de la tradición de la Antigua y Nueva Alianza, en primer lugar del mismo Cristo y de sus Apóstoles. La Iglesia debe dar testimonio de la misericordia de Dios revelada en Cristo, en toda su misión de Mesías, profesándola principalmente como verdad salvífica de fe necesaria para una vida coherente con la misma fe, tratando después de introducirla y encarnarla en la vida bien sea de sus fieles y en cuanto sea posible en la de todos los hombres de buena voluntad. Finalmente, la Iglesia—profesando la misericordia y permaneciendo siempre fiel a ella—tiene el derecho y el deber de recurrir a la misericordia de Dios, implorándola frente a todos los fenómenos del mal físico y moral, ante todas las amenazas que pesan sobre el entero horizonte de la vida de la humanidad contemporánea." (DM VII)

El párroco, Padre Antonio Cacciapuoti, con la asistencia del Padre George J. Bobowski, el Padre John-Paul González y los feligreses, tomaron diversas medidas para difundir la Devoción a la Divina Misericordia a través de congresos anuales, formación mensual, celebración de la Fiesta y oraciones. Invitados de diferentes partes del mundo: Polonia, Filipinas y Rusia fueron invitados como oradores. El Arzobispo Kondrusiewicz de Bielorrusia, el obispo Bacani de Filipinas y otros. Especialmente de Bialystok – Ciudad de la Misericordia,



Polonia, estuvieron presentes el Arzobispo Stanislaw Szymek y el Obispo Profesor Edward Ozorowski. El Arzobispo Ozorowski tuvo una serie de homilias y conferencias, respondiendo a las preguntas de los feligreses. Las respuestas fueron publicadas por la Oficyna Wydawnicza "Wybor" en el libro "Diálogos en Misericordia Divina" en la serie de la Biblioteca de la Misericordia. La Biblioteca de la Misericordia se inició bajo la supervisión de Su Excelencia el Arzobispo Edward Ozorowski, el Reverendo Monseñor Zenon Jarzabek de la Congregación para el Clero del Vaticano, Ewa Bobowska, Presidenta de la Casa Editorial "Wybor" y Lelis Cruzata, Moderadora de la Asociación "Faustinum" de los Apóstoles de la Divina Misericordia y el Ministerio de la Divina Misericordia en la Parroquia Christ the King. Desde el 2006, la Biblioteca del Instituto Laico de la Divina Misericordia ha publicado más de 10 libros y muchas otras publicaciones.



En la parroquia de Christ the King, la Devoción a la Divina Misericordia obtuvo prominencia. En la Parroquia se organizaron congresos de la Divina Misericordia, se trajeron y colocaron en la Iglesia las pinturas de Santa Faustina y del Padre Miguel Sopocko. En el 2006, el Padre Antonio Cacciapuoti, el Padre George J. Bobowski y el Padre John-Paul González y la Sra. Lelis Cruzata convocaron el Primer Congreso de la Divina Misericordia del Sur de California que tuvo lugar del 28 al 30 de Abril de 2006 y continúa hasta ahora. Este año es el XVII Congreso de la Divina Misericordia en nuestro Parroquia

Los primeros en responder al llamado fueron los feligreses de Christ the King, apoyados por el Instituto Laico de la Divina Misericordia y la Comunidad One Heart and One Mind con la señora Rosalind Diego. El Congreso anual en Christ the King reúne a cientos de fieles católicos de toda la Arquidiócesis de Los Ángeles. "Para encomendar el mundo a la Divina Misericordia que el mensaje del amor misericordioso de Dios proclamado a través de Santa Faustina pueda ser dado a conocer a todos los pueblos de la tierra ... Que se cumpla la promesa del Señor Jesús: de aquí debe salir la chispa que preparará al mundo para su venida final". (Homilía del Papa Juan Pablo II, Cracovia, 2002) Hay oraciones y devoción a la Divina Misericordia, pero sobre todo hay tantos esfuerzos para que el pueblo tenga en su corazón la verdad, que Dios es misericordioso con él.

Este nuevo centro dedicado a la Divina Misericordia ha hecho una contribución considerable a la difusión de la devoción a la Divina Misericordia, el atributo más elevado de Dios. La devoción a la Divina Misericordia ocupa un lugar importante en el ministerio de los Sacerdotes

que sirven en la Parroquia Christ the King. La Divina Misericordia es una forma de vida para los feligreses.

Fue Voluntad de Dios traer la Devoción a Su Misericordia a Hollywood. Ahora es el Tiempo de la Misericordia, la Divina Misericordia. Este es el momento de llevar la misericordia de Dios a todos, estamos muy agradecidos a quienes apoyaron esta idea desde el principio, a quienes nos ayudaron a compartir el tiempo de la Divina Misericordia con los fieles en Los Ángeles. Primero, debemos dar gracias a Jesús Misericordioso que nos permitió ser instrumentos de su misericordia. Nuestra gratitud y agradecimiento a todos los Sacerdotes que sirvieron y sirven en la Parroquia de Christ the King en Los Ángeles, quienes continuamente difunden la Divina Misericordia en su comunidad.



Necesitamos recordarlos a todos: Mons. Alexander George, Mons. Antonio Cacciapuoti, Mons. Paul M. Montoya, el Padre Jaun J. Ochoa, Mons. Charles Chaffman, los padres: John-Paul González, Chidi U. Ekpendu, Louie Rayes, y los Diáconos Ricardo Villacorta, Marco Antonio García, Félix Rack, y René Burgos.

Gracias a los feligreses de la Parroquia Católica Romana Christ the King quienes abrazaron la Divina Misericordia en este lugar específico. Especialmente nuestro agradecimiento a los líderes del Ministerio de la Divina Misericordia. También, nuestro agradecimiento a los miembros de “Faustinum”.

Aunque la hermana Faustina vivió en Polonia, encontramos muchas personas devotas a la Divina Misericordia aquí en Los Ángeles. Creemos que el santuario de la Divina Misericordia en la parroquia de Christ the King no es sólo un lugar de recogimiento, oración y contemplación de la Divina Misericordia y la verdad más importante de nuestra fe, en el Hollywood “ruidoso”, sino también son los peldaños al cielo, donde siempre veneraremos a Dios en Su Misericordia.

En el 2019, el Padre Juan Ochoa asumió su posición como Administrador de la Parroquia Christ the King, y en 2021 fue instalado como párroco de nuestra Parroquia. Desde el comienzo de su ministerio, el Padre Juan abrazó la Devoción a la Divina Misericordia y se comprometió a hacer que la Iglesia de Christ the King sea declarada como Santuario Arquidiocesano de la Divina Misericordia. Nuestro sueño y el trabajo de todos los Feligreses se hizo realidad el 14 de Octubre de 2023, el Arzobispo José H. Gómez declaró el Santuario Arquidiocesano de la Divina Misericordia en la parroquia de Christ the King.

*Ministerio de la Divina Misericordia
en la Parroquia Christ the King*

DIVINE MERCY IMAGE in Christ the King Church

The image of the Divine Mercy was enthroned in a chapel within the Church of Christ the King on September 13, 2003. Since its installation, the image has attracted parishioners and members of the wider community who not only come to seek divine assistance but who also are reminded that they themselves are called to be instruments of mercy to others. The veneration of this specific sacred image is one of the elements of the authentic forms of devotion to Our Lord, the Divine Mercy Incarnate, revealed to Saint Faustina Kowalska on February 22, 1931

In 2003, three years after the canonization of Sister Faustina, the Image of the Merciful Jesus came from Poland to the local parish of Christ the King and is venerated in a particular section of the church, which also includes the paintings of Saint Faustina and Blessed Father Michael Sopocko. The Image was blessed in Rome by Holy Father John Paul II. The Pope, himself a great devotee to Merciful Jesus, upon the request of Father Zenon Jarzabek and Father George J. Bobowski, blessed and signed the Image on April 30, 2003, during a papal audience in the Vatican. This Image at the Church of Christ the King, one of the contemporary copies of the countenance known through Saint Faustina's revelations, deserves special attention. Looking carefully at this Image, you will see Saint John Paul II's signature. Today, the Image of Merciful Jesus is the only one Icon in the United States signed by Saint John Paul II. This makes this Icon a relic.

The Images of Merciful Jesus, Saint Faustina and Blessed Michael Sopocko were painted by Dymitr Grozdeu, a well-known Artist who paints religious images. He is also a graphic artist, and sculptor. His Divine Mercy Paintings had traveled as far as the Philippines and Brazil. He is the author of many other religious paintings.

The words of Jesus heard by a modest nun had been heard and repeated in innumerable languages: "Tell the world about my mercy" (*Diary* 699). Thanks to devotees to God's Mercy, and especially to Father Antonio Cacciapuoti and Father George J. Bobowski and all Christ the King Pastors, up to our current Pastor Fr. Juan Ochoa, the echo of these words of Jesus became much louder even in the world's movie capital, Hollywood.



For many years, the devotion to Divine Mercy has encountered serious difficulties in the Church and only the commitment of the contemporary Bishop of Krakow, Cardinal Karol Wojtyła made possible for these obstacles to disappear. No wonder that he was interested in a contemporary mystic, humble, uneducated nun, who has been chosen by Christ as the Apostle of His mercy. Once again, the word of God's Son has been accomplished: "I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike.

Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him." (Mt 11:25-27).

The teachings about God's Mercy are one of the foundations of John Paul II's Petrine Ministry. In his book "Memory and Identity" there is a separate chapter titled "The Mystery of Mercy"; He wrote: "I have chosen here to speak of Sister Faustina and the devotion to merciful Christ which she promoted, because she too belongs to our time [...] Saint Faustina's Diary appears as a particular Gospel of Divine Mercy, written from the 20th Century's perspective. The people of that time understood her message. They understood it in the light of the dramatic build-up of evil during the Second World War and the cruelty of the totalitarian system. It was as if Christ had wanted to reveal that the limit imposed upon evil, of which man is both perpetrator and victim, is ultimately Divine Mercy." Thus, in such light we should see the initiative of the devotees of the Divine Mercy, whom - with the Image of Jesus painted for the parish of Christ the King in Los Angeles - first made a trip to the Vatican.

The faithful from the Parish of Christ the King led spiritually by their pastor Father Antonio Cacciapuoti, Father George J. Bobowski prepared themselves for the enthronement of the Image in a separate chapel with prayers and deep reflection during special days of retreat conducted by Bishops from Bialystok — City of Mercy.

First, on September 6 and 7, 2003, they have met Bishop Edward Ozorowski, who delivered the lecture titled "Is There a Need to Talk About God's Mercy These Days?"

Also, he blessed a smaller image of the Merciful Christ, which soon after begun its peregrination through the households of the families of the parish which continues until now. As of today, over one thousand families





were blessed to have the Icon in their homes for one week.

The main celebration took place one week later, on September 13 and 14; presided by Archbishop Stanislaw Szymcki from Bialystok, Poland. On the first day's conference he taught about the "Divine Mercy according to the teachings of John Paul II" and celebrated Holy Mass.

The following day, during the solemnly concelebrated Holy Mass, Archbishop Szymcki blessed the Chapel of Divine Mercy in Christ the King Church. This is where the Image of the Merciful Christ found its place. Jesus is really present; miracles had happened and continue to happen touching people's lives.

On September 14, 2003, the day the Chapel was blessed coincides with the Solemnity of the Elevation of the Cross, the worshippers of God's Mercy remember this day as the day when Christ dictated to Saint Faustina the Chaplet to the Divine Mercy.

On April 11, 2010, during the Divine Mercy Sunday, after 7 years, since the Chapel's initial blessing, and thanks to the generosity of the Chen Family, the altar in the Chapel of Merciful Christ, commissioned to end by Mr. William Gonzalez, has been completed and solemnly blessed by Father Antonio Cacciapuoti, Father Charles Chaffman, Father George J. Bobowski and Father John-Paul Gonzalez with the assistance of Deacon Ricardo Villacorta.

Christ the King Parish has been blessed to have had all the priests who were dedicated to the Devotion to Divine Mercy. In 2019 Father Juan Ochoa became Administrator of Christ the King Parish. From the beginning of his ministry, Father Juan embraced the Devotion to Divine Mercy and committed himself to have declared Christ the King Church as the Archdiocese's Sanctuary of Divine Mercy, which was declared by Archbishop Jose H. Gomez on October 14, 2023.



Lelis Cruzata

IMAGEN de JESÚS MISERICORDIOSO en la Iglesia de Christ the King

El Santuario de la Divina Misericordia tiene su origen en la imagen de la Divina Misericordia, que fue entronizada en una capilla dentro de la Iglesia de Christ de King el 13 de Septiembre del 2003. Desde su instalación, la imagen ha atraído a feligreses y miembros de la comunidad en general que no soló vienen a buscar la ayuda divina, sino que también les recuerda que ellos mismos están llamados a ser instrumentos de misericordia para los demás. La veneración de esta sagrada imagen es uno de los elementos de las formas auténticas de devoción a Nuestro Señor, la Divina Misericordia Encarnada, revelada a santa Faustina Kowalska el 22 de Febrero de 1931.



En el 2003, tres años después de la canonización de Sor Faustina, la imagen de Jesús Misericordioso llegó desde Polonia a la parroquia local de Cristo Rey y es venerada en una sección particular de la iglesia, que también incluye las imágenes de Santa Faustina y el Beato Padre Michael Sopocko. La Imagen fue bendecida en Roma por el Santo Padre Juan Pablo II. El Papa, un gran devoto de Jesús Misericordioso, a pedido del Padre Zenon Jarzabek y del Padre George J. Bobowski, bendijo y firmó la imagen el 30 de Abril, 2003 durante una audiencia en el Vaticano. Esta imagen que está en la Iglesia de Christ the King, una de las copias contemporáneas de la Imagen conocida a través de las revelaciones de Santa Faustina, merece atención especial. Mirando de cerca la imagen, se ve la firma de San Juan Pablo II. Hoy, la Imagen de Jesús Misericordioso es el único icono en los Estados Unidos firmado por San Juan Pablo II. Esto hace que el icono sea una reliquia.

Las Imágenes de Jesús Misericordioso, Santa Faustina y el Beato Michael Sopocko fueron pintados por Dymitr Grozdeu. Un artista conocido que pinta imágenes religiosas. También es artista gráfico y escultor. Sus imágenes de la Divina Misericordia han viajado hasta Filipinas y Brasil. Es el autor de otras imágenes religiosas.

Las palabras escuchadas por una modesta monja son repetidas hoy en muchos idiomas: “habla al mundo entero de mi inconcebible misericordia”



(Diario 699). Gracias a los devotos de la Misericordia de Dios, y especialmente al Padre Antonio Cacciapuoti y al Padre George J. Bobowski y todos los Párrocos de Christ the King incluyendo nuestro actual Párroco Juan Ochoa, el eco de las palabras de Jesús se hizo más fuerte incluso en la capital del cine mundial – Hollywood.

Durante muchos años, la devoción a la Divina Misericordia ha enfrentado muchas dificultades en la Iglesia y solo por el compromiso del obispo de Cracovia, el cardenal Karol Wojtyła, quien hizo lo posible para que estos

obstáculos desaparecieran. Desde el principio el misticismo ha estado muy cerca de san Juan Pablo II, quien desde su juventud se ha interesado en la obra de san Juan de la Cruz. Ha dedicado al místico español tanto su mayor obra literaria, el poema El canto del Dios oculto, como su tesis doctoral: “Doctrina de fide apud S. Joannem de Cruce”, escrita en Latin.

No es de extrañar que estuviera interesado en una monja mística contemporánea, humilde y sin educación, quien ha sido elegida por Cristo como el Apóstol de su misericordia. Una vez más se ha cumplido la palabra del Hijo de Dios: “Te alabo, Padre, Señor del cielo y de la tierra, por haber ocultado estas cosas a los sabios y a los prudentes y haberlas revelado a los pequeños. Sí, Padre, porque así lo has querido. Todo me ha sido dado por mi Padre, y nadie conoce al Hijo sino el Padre, así como nadie conoce al Padre sino el Hijo y aquel a quien el Hijo se lo quiera revelar.” (Mt 11, 25-27)

Las enseñanzas sobre la misericordia de Dios son uno de los fundamentos del ministerio petrino de Juan Pablo II. En su libro “Memoria e identidad” hay un capítulo separado titulado “El misterio de la misericordia”; en el escribió: “Recuerdo aquí a Sor Faustina y la devoción al Cristo Misericordioso iniciada por ella, lo hago también porque ella es de nuestra época [...] Las palabras escritas en el Diario de Santa Faustina parecen ser un Evangelio especial de la Misericordia de Dios escrito con la perspectiva del siglo XX. La gente de este siglo entendió este mensaje. Lo han comprendido a través de esta dramática compilación del mal, traída por la Segunda Guerra Mundial y más tarde, por las crueldades de los sistemas totalitarios. Es como que Cristo quiso mostrar que la medida del mal, en la que la víctima fue el hombre, esta finalmente en la Misericordia de Dios”. Así, con tal luz deberíamos ver la iniciativa de los devotos de la Divina Misericordia, quienes con la imagen de Jesús pintada para la parroquia de Christ the King en Los Ángeles – hicieron por primera vez un viaje al Vaticano.

Los feligreses de la Parroquia de Christ the King guiados espiritualmente por su párroco, el Padre Antonio Cacciapuoti y el Padre George J. Bobowski, se prepararon para la entronización de la Imagen en una capilla separada con oraciones y profunda reflexión durante los días especiales de retiro

conducidos por los obispos de Bialystok. - Ciudad de la Misericordia. Primero, el 6 y 7 de Septiembre del 2003, conocieron al obispo Edward Ozorowski, quien dio la conferencia titulada “¿Es necesario hablar sobre la misericordia de Dios en estos días?” Asimismo, se bendijo una imagen más pequeña del Cristo Misericordioso, que poco después inició su peregrinación por los hogares de las familias de la parroquia que continúa hasta el día de hoy. Aproximadamente mil familias tuvieron la bendición de tener la imagen en sus hogares durante una semana.

La celebración principal empezó una semana después, los días 13 y 14 de Septiembre, 2003 presidida por el arzobispo Stanislaw Szymecki de Bialystok, Polonia. En la conferencia del primer día enseñó sobre la “Divina Misericordia según las enseñanzas de Juan Pablo II” y celebró la Santa Misa. Al día siguiente, durante la Santa Misa, el Arzobispo Szymecki bendijo la Capilla de la Divina Misericordia en la Iglesia Christ the King. Aquí es donde la Imagen del Cristo Misericordioso encontró su lugar. Jesús está realmente presente; milagros han sucedido y continúan sucediendo en la vida de las personas que la visitan.

El 14 de Septiembre, 2003 conocido como el día de la bendición de la Capilla coincide con la Solemnidad de la Elevación de la Cruz, los devotos de la Misericordia de Dios recuerdan este día como el día en que Cristo dictó a santa Faustina la Coronilla a la Divina Misericordia.

El 11 de Abril del 2010, durante el Domingo de la Divina Misericordia, después de 7 años, desde la bendición inicial de la Capilla, y gracias a la generosidad de la Familia Chen, se ha instalado el altar de la Capilla del Cristo Misericordioso, construido por el Sr. William González, completado y bendecido solemnemente por el Padre Antonio Cacciapuoti, el Padre Charles Chaffman, el Padre George J. Bobowski y el Padre John-Paul González con la asistencia del Diácono Ricardo Villacorta.

La Parroquia de Christ the King ha tenido la bendición de haber contado con todos los sacerdotes que se dedicaron a la Devoción a la Divina Misericordia. En el 2019 el Padre Juan Ochoa asumió como Administrador de la Parroquia Christ the King. Desde el inicio de su ministerio, el Padre Juan abrazó la Devoción a la Divina Misericordia y se comprometió a hacer que la Iglesia Christ the King sea declarada como Santuario de la Divina Misericordia de la Arquidiócesis de Los Ángeles, lo cual fue declarado por el Arzobispo José H. Gómez el 14 de Octubre del 2023.



Lelis Cruzata



Image: Jesus, I Trust in You

The first image of the Divine Mercy, according to the vision which Sister Faustina received, was painted under her supervision in the studio of Eugeniusz Kazimirowski in Vilnius in 1934. During the Second World War other images were painted, and among them the image by Adolf Hyła, painted with the co-operation of Father Józef Andrasz SJ, who was Sister Faustina's confessor in Kraków. Copies and reproductions of Adolf Hyła's second image of Merciful Jesus from the convent chapel of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Kraków-Łagiewniki, quickly spread throughout the world. Thus, Jesus' words about this image were fulfilled: "I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel, and [then] throughout the world" (*Diary* 47).

In the early 1950s, there were more and more complaints from clergy, including bishops, about the introduction of the Divine Mercy image into churches. The image was spreading everywhere; however, as the process of raising Sister Faustina Kowalska to the altars had not yet been initiated, the image was coming from a source not investigated by the Church. Bishops also cited the instructions of the Holy See, which advised great caution when introducing new images. In this situation, in 1954 Father Michał Sopoćko, acting on the suggestion of the Polish Episcopal Conference, organized a competition for the painting of Jesus, presenting Him appearing to the Apostles at the Last Supper after his Resurrection and establishing the sacrament of penance. Three painters took part in the competition, and Ludomir Ślędziński was the winner. On October 5, 1954, the Polish Episcopal Conference accepted this painting for veneration. Despite numerous attempts by Father Michał Sopoćko, Merciful Jesus' paintings by Ślędziński did not spread.

In 1959 a Notification appeared prohibiting the spread of devotion to Divine Mercy as given by Sister Faustina. The document left to the church shepherds the decision to whether Merciful Jesus images should be removed from churches. At that time many of these images were removed, but certain churches kept the images, and the faithful still prayed before them.

In 1978, following the cancellation of the Holy See Notification caused by a mistranslation of the Diary, images of the Divine Mercy came back into churches. Today there is probably no country without the image of Merciful Jesus painted according to St. Sister Faustina's vision. Today it is the best-known image of Jesus Christ.

The Vision of the image

The prophetic mission of Sister Faustina began with the vision she had in the Płock convent on February 22, 1931, when Jesus ordered her to paint His image. It was the Sunday on which the Church celebrates the Feast of the Cathedral of St. Peter, this being a significant context for the work that Christ inaugurated in the Church through His 'Secretary,' Sister Faustina spoke of this event, first to her confessor, who interpreted Jesus' request on a purely spiritual level, and said: "Paint God's image in your soul" (*Diary* 49). But when she was going away from the confessional, the Lord Jesus explained: "My image is already in your soul. (...) I want this image, which you will paint with a brush, to be solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter; that Sunday is to be the Feast of Mercy" (*Diary* 49). From then on, Sister Faustina knew for certain that the Lord Jesus was asking for a material image, but she had many difficulties in fulfilling this request, because she neither knew how to paint nor was acquainted with anyone who could help her in this. When she spoke about this to her superior, Mother Róża Kłobukowska, the superior asked for a sign from heaven, to confirm the truthfulness of the revelation. The Lord Jesus said: "I will make this all clear to the Superior by means of the graces which I will grant through this image" (*Diary* 51).

At the end of 1932 Sister Faustina left Płock and moved to Warsaw, but still the vision of the image of Merciful Jesus had not yet been painted on canvas. The Lord Jesus therefore urged her, saying: "Know that if you neglect the matter of the painting of the image and the whole work of mercy, you will have to answer for a multitude of souls on the day of judgement" (*Diary* 154).

The Divine Mercy Image painted by Kazimirowski

The first image of Merciful Jesus was not painted until June 1934 in Vilnius. Sister Faustina met Father Michał Sopoćko there, who, as her spiritual guide in Vilnius, was to help her in achieving the mission of Mercy. "Driven by curiosity – remembers Father Sopoćko – as to what the picture would look like, rather than by faith in the authenticity of Sister Faustina's visions, I decided to have this image painted. I made an arrangement with an artist, the painter Eugeniusz Kazimirowski to paint the image following the directions of Sister Faustina, to whom her Superior allowed to come twice a week accompanied by her, to indicate what this image was to look like."

The painting of the first image of Merciful Jesus was surrounded by great discretion, which is why Mother Superior Irena Krzyżanowska accompanied Sister Faustina to the artist's studio. The work lasted for several months, and when the image was finally done (June 1934), Sister Faustina was not pleased with it, and while crying in the chapel complained

to the Lord Jesus: “Who will paint You as beautiful as You are?” (*Diary* 313). In response, she heard: “Not in the beauty of the color, nor of the brush, lies the greatness of this image, but in My grace” (*Diary* 313).

The image was placed in a dark corridor at the convent of the Bernardine Sisters, in St. Michael’s Church, where Father Sopoćko was then the rector. Sister Faustina urged her confessor to put the image in the church. “Finally” – Father Sopoćko wrote in his memoirs – “in Holy Week 1935 she announced to me that the Lord Jesus was demanding me to put the image for three days at the Gate of Dawn, where the Triduum would take place, (...) Stanisław Zawadzki, the Gate of Dawn parish priest, asked me to deliver a sermon at the Triduum. I agreed, provided that this image be allowed to adorn the cloister window, where it looked impressive and drew everyone’s



attention more than the image of Our Lady.” From April, 26 to April, 28, 1935, at the planned Feast of The Divine Mercy, the new image of the Merciful Jesus, the crucified and risen Savior of the world, was shown to the world for the first time. This happened at the Gate of Dawn Shrine of Our Lady of Mercy. Sister Faustina herself attended these celebrations, and wrote the following words in the pages of her *Diary*: “Strangely, all things came about just as the Lord had requested. In fact, it was on the first Sunday after Easter [April 1935] that the image was publicly honored by crowds of people for the first time. For three days it was exposed and received public veneration. Since it was placed at the very top of a window at the Gate of Dawn, [Shrine of Our Lady, above the ‘Eastern Gate’ to the city of Vilnius], it could be seen from a great distance. At the Gate of Dawn, during these three days, the closing of the Jubilee of the Redemption of the World was being celebrated, marking the nineteen hundred years that had passed since the Passion of our Savior. I see now that the work of Redemption is bound up with the work of mercy requested by the Lord” (*Diary* 89).

After these celebrations, the image was returned to the Bernardine convent, whence it was brought to adorn altars at Corpus Christi processions. On April 4, 1937, after a favorable opinion by experts, the image of Merciful Jesus was blessed and placed – by permission of the

Metropolitan Archbishop of Vilnius, Romuald Jałbrzykowski – in St. Michael's Church in Vilnius, where it was venerated until 1948.

In 1937 the first reproductions of the copy of the image of Merciful Jesus (by Łucja Bałzukiewiczówna) were published in Kraków by the Józef Cebulski publishing house. "These image" – Sister Faustina wrote in a letter to Father M. Sopoćko – "are not so nice (...). Those who buy them are drawn by the grace of God and God Himself is at work here. Our congregation has bought enough of them. Mother Irena hands out these images and booklets. We have even said we will give them away at the convent gate."

Reproductions and copies of Kazimirowski's painting of Merciful Jesus spread during the Second World War. In Vilnius, the photographer Nowicki, commissioned by Father Sopoćko, made thousands of prints of the image in various sizes (the smallest being about one centimeter), which, among other things, were sewn to the hats and shoulder straps of soldiers' uniforms. Printed images of Merciful Jesus were handed out from the convents of the Congregation of Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy and sent together with parcels to prisons and concentration camps.

In August 1948, the communist authorities closed the Bernardine Convent in Vilnius, closed St. Michael's church, and transported its church furnishings, together with the image of Merciful Jesus by Kazimirowski, to the still active church of the Holy Spirit, placing them behind the main altar, where the former monastic choir used to be. From there, probably in 1949, Father Józef Graszewicz (a friend of Father Sopoćko and a devotee of the Divine Mercy) took the image of Merciful Jesus from the parish priest Father John Ellert and placed it in a church in Nowa Ruda (near Grodno), where he was the parish priest. The image with the added inscription: "Jesus, I trust in You" was placed high above the rood screen which separates the chancel from the central nave. Residents of Nowa Ruda prayed before the image for many years, even when the communist authorities closed the church and wanted to convert it into a warehouse.

In 1970 all movable property belonging to that church was taken away to the church in Porzecz. Only the image of Merciful Jesus remained, because it was hung too high, and there was not a suitable ladder to remove it. In 1986, the image in the church in Nowa Ruda was secretly replaced, a copy was installed and the original image was transported to Vilnius. In 1987, following necessary conservation work on the canvas, the image was placed at the altar of the newly renovated shrine of the Holy Spirit. In 2005 it was moved to the Holy Trinity Church in Vilnius, which was designated the Diocesan Shrine of Divine Mercy.

The Divine Mercy Image painted by Adolf Hyla

The most famous image of Divine Mercy is the one painted by Adolf Hyla, which is in the sanctuary in Kraków-Łągiewniki. The artist painted the image of Merciful Jesus on the basis of Sister Faustina's description left

in her Diary and on the basis of the first image, the Kazimirowski painting, a copy of the reproduction having been given to him by Mother Irena Krzyżanowska, the Superior of the convent of the Congregation of Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. Father Józef Andrasz SJ (Kraków spiritual guide of Sister Faustina) actively participated in the creation of this image. He had been living in the convent in Łagiewniki since 1942, thus close to the home of the artist.

Father J. Andrasz SJ consecrated the first image of Divine Mercy painted by Mr. Hyła on March 7, 1943. Since this image did not fit into the altar where it was exposed during Masses in honor of Divine Mercy, the Superior of the convent Mother Irena Krzyżanowska commissioned the second image from A. Hyła, intended to correspond in size and shape to the space of the side altar. At the same time, Mother Michaela Moraczewska, Superior General of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, commissioned the image for the Kraków chapel from St. Batowski, a Lvov painter. When the image painted by Batowski from Lvov arrived at the convent in Łagiewniki in the autumn of 1943, the sisters were in trouble, because they did not know which image ought



to be in the chapel. Cardinal Adam Sapieha helped them, when one day he happened to come to Łagiewniki to rest in the convent garden. Taking advantage of the occasion, the sisters brought the two images to the living room: those by Hyła and by Batowski. The Cardinal, after hearing the story of the two images, said: "If the image by Hyła is his own votive offering – let it be in the chapel" and for the image by Batowski the Cardinal promised to find a good place (the Church of Divine Mercy in Smoleńsk Street in Kraków).

On the first Sunday after Easter, April 16, 1944, Father J. Andrasz consecrated the new image by Hyła, which corresponded in size and shape to the space of the side altar. This image soon became famous for its graces. Copies and reproductions spread around the world, thus fulfilling the words of the Lord Jesus' to Sister Faustina at the very first revelation: "I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel, and throughout the world" (*Diary* 47). In the original version the landscape of Łagiewniki was painted in the background, but later – because of correspondence with

Father M. Sopoćko – the artist painted that over, drawing a floor under the feet of Christ and making the background dark green.

The image was placed on the wall on the right side of the chapel, but for the solemn celebrations in honor of the Divine Mercy, celebrated on the third Sunday of the month, it was moved to the left side altar, formerly occupied by an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In 1959, after the Notification of the Holy See banning the spread of devotion in the forms provided by Sister Faustina, the images of Merciful Jesus were removed from many churches, the image remained on the altar in the convent chapel in Łagiewniki, by decision of Archbishop Eugeniusz Baziak.

The Divine Mercy Image from the convent chapel at the Shrine in Kraków-Łagiewniki enjoys great popularity. Copies and reproductions can be found in all corners of the world, not only in churches but also in homes, workplaces and wherever worshippers of the Divine Mercy live and work. People from all over the world come as pilgrims to this image, to beg graces for themselves and others. The numerous votive offerings placed in the boxes on the walls of the chapel evidence the fulfilment of Christ's promises to those who confidently pray before this image and practice mercy toward others. Karol Wojtyła prayed before this image many times; as priest he celebrated in the presence of this image solemn services in honor of the Divine Mercy; and later as bishop and shepherd of the Archdiocese of Kraków. On June 7, 1997, he prayed by the image as Pope John Paul II. It was then that he said "Anyone can come here, look at this image of the Merciful Jesus, his Heart radiating grace, and hear in the depths of his own soul what Blessed Faustina heard: 'Fear nothing. I am with you always' (Diary 613). And if this person responds with a sincere heart: 'Jesus, I trust in you!' he will find comfort in all his anxieties and fears." The Holy Father Benedict XVI also prayed before this image on May 27, 2006; church dignitaries pray here, heads of state, scholars, and artists, people of different callings and professions, and even different religions. Here, before the Merciful Jesus – as they say – there are no divisions. Here all that matters is a trusting heart and the attitude of practicing mercy toward others.

The Merciful Jesus Image by Ludomir Ślendziński

After the war, in the 1950s, some of those who attended the Episcopal Conference declared they had reservations about spreading the image of Merciful Jesus, which after all came through private revelations and had not yet been examined by the Church. The Episcopate therefore ordered prudence in dealing with the image of Merciful Jesus according to the vision of Sister Faustina. However, with the purpose of there being an image of Divine Mercy, and that Divine Mercy has been venerated in the Church since the beginning, Father Sopoćko – at the suggestion of the Episcopal Conference – in 1954 organized a competition; artists were invited to paint

an image of Jesus appearing to the Apostles at the Last Supper after His Resurrection and establishing the sacrament of penance.

Father Sopoćko also invited the painter Adolf Hyła to this competition, the author of many images of Merciful Jesus, including the already famous miraculous image at the chapel at the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Kraków-Łagiewniki. Adolf Hyła however, refused to participate in this contest, because he believed that this was going to be a compromise, which would not serve the devotion of Divine Mercy. Adolf Hyła wrote in a letter to Father M. Sopoćko that "This compromise, among others, shall be to compose an image of Christ the Merciful in such a way as to simultaneously present a scene from His life as described in the Gospels and several details of the vision of Sister Faustina. The result, however, of this compromise is an image that does not present



the scene of the Gospel and which narrows the concept of God's mercy. Indeed, according to the Gospel (Jn 20: 19-24) the Lord Jesus, after entering through the closed doors to the Cenacle, welcomed the disciples saying: "Peace be with you", he showed them the wounds on His hands and His side, and he breathed the Holy Spirit on them and spoke the words with which He instituted the sacrament of penance.

The existing image presents just the floor and the upper room door, but Christ Himself is doing something else: He is showing the rays of Blood and Water gushing from His side and He is blessing. At the same time, the proposed image would limit the concept of God's mercy expressed in the vision of Sister Faustina, because it would only narrow it to the mercy manifested in the sacrament of penance."

The painting by Ludomir Ślendziński won the competition, which was entered by three artists. The Main Committee of the Polish Episcopate allowed this image for devotion on October 5, 1954, although it raised some objections on the artistic ground. This image (the first image by Ślendziński) is in the chapel of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Warsaw Grochów (44 Hetmańska Street).

“You will prepare the world for my final coming” (*Diary 429*)

A special prophecy given to us in the 20th century and still valid today is the message of God’s mercy given by a nun from the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy – Saint Faustina Kowalska from the Blessed Sacrament. The message of God contained in her prophetism is a response to the reality of human misery, especially the spiritual. The events of both world wars, totalitarianism, harassment, terrorist attacks clearly indicated that humanity has still not found peace. Modern people often abandon faith, seeking happiness on their own, as the evangelical prodigal son did. It becomes the living environment of today’s man, therefore, the world of material things, and he himself, abandoning the spiritual life, often enters the reality of sin and enslavement to it. Fear and lack of meaning of existence become a consequence of this lifestyle.

God wanted to show all people the source of history once again, which is His mercy, which has the strength to overcome all sin, resurrect what is dead. Jesus Christ spoke after his resurrection to frightened disciples: “Peace be with you” (Jn 20:19) and pointed to his own heart full of love. Today he gives with new power through St. Faustina’s words comfort to all those immersed in iniquity and points to the source of salvation, which is His heart burning with mercy. Calls to all people to trust Him and accept His mercy while there is still time for forgiveness.

Saint Faustina is the person through whom God delivered the message about his mercy, especially needed “hic et nunc”. The mission of Saint Faustina contains numerous similarities to the messages of the Old Testament prophets.

Apart from a specific analogy, the prophetic mission of this mystic has its own characteristics and a unique message. It applies to the entire world. It is eschatological prophetism, intended to prepare the world for the second coming of the Savior. Christ Himself gives his “secretary” the following challenge: “You will prepare the world for my final coming” (*Diary 429*). The Saint was also obliged to this task by Our Lady, who spoke to her: “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 who will come, not as a merciful Savior, but as a just Judge (*Diary 635*).

Mary indicated to the saint that her mission was to proclaim the truth to the world about God’s greatest attribute: “Speak to souls about this great mercy while it is still the time for [granting] mercy. If you keep silent now, you will be answering for a great number of souls on that terrible day” (*Diary 635*). This command clearly points to the prophetic charisma of St. Faustina. It is speaking about God’s mercy towards all humanity. This is a prophetic task she fulfilled during her whole earthly life, and she still fulfills it from heaven. She wrote about it a significant confession in the Diary: “I want to tell souls of Your goodness and encourage them to trust in Your mercy.

That is my mission, which You Yourself have entrusted to me, O Lord, in this life and in the life to come” (*Diary* 1325).

Every baptized person who is not indifferent to man’s salvation, is specially predestined to reveal God’s goodness and encourage trust in Him. The prophetism of Saint Faustina is included in the mission of the universal Church, it is a sign of hope and a call to every believer. So, we are to reveal God’s mercy to the world - as a way to save modern man.



The life of the saint reminds us that every baptized person participates in the prophetic mission of Christ himself. Saint John Paul II states that the Church must still be missionary in order to endure: “The mission of Christ the Redeemer, which is entrusted to the Church, is still very far from completion. As the second millennium after Christ’s coming draws to an end, an overall view of the human race shows that this mission is still only beginning and that we must commit ourselves wholeheartedly to its service. It is the Spirit who impels us to proclaim the great works of God: “For if I preach the Gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!” (1 Cor 9: 16)” (RMis 1).

The Pope gives a realistic assessment of the situation of the Church of the third millennium. It is easy to say that the Church is weak in Europe and on other continents, or even non-existent. John Paul II already writes about the “re-evangelization” (cf. RMis 33) of formerly Christian countries. We can think about the reasons for this situation. One of the reasons is loss of awareness that God sent the entire Church to the world. Yes, modern Christians often lack faith in the infinite value of Christ’s redemption, hence the abandonment of the prophetic mission of announcing Christ to the world. This lack is filled by the message of God’s mercy, which is addressed to every person.

In the history of salvation, on the threshold of the Old and New Covenants, God called the prophet John the Baptist; Similarly, on the threshold of the second and the third millennium, God gives the world a new prophet who announces the second coming of the Savior. It is Saint

Faustina – sent to humanity with God’s mercy, as he himself said to her: “ In the Old Covenant I sent prophets wielding thunderbolts to My People. Today I am sending you with My mercy to the people of the whole world.” (Diary 1588)

The message of Divine Mercy given to the world by Saint Faustina it is a revelation of God’s forgiving love that wants to heal and save souls from damnation. Jesus reminds us of this in the words when He said: “ Souls perish in spite of My bitter Passion.” (*Diary* 965).

The death of John Paul II on the eve of the Feast of Divine Mercy is another indication of the mission of Saint Faustina. The same pope said that only those saints who are united with God can overcome the present mystery of iniquity. Saint Faustina attitude is an example of this, because “since the Church in Christ is a mystery, she ought to be considered the sign and instrument of holiness... Men and women saints have always been the source and origin of renewal in the most difficult circumstances in the Church’s history. Today we have the greatest need of saints whom we must assiduously beg God to raise up” (ChL 16).

Anyone can participate in the implementation of the prophetic mission of St. Faustina, because everyone is obliged by God’s message and the historical situation of humanity, which - as never before - needs revelation of God’s love and the grace of God’s mercy.

I wonder myself why this is a chosen place, because this is the phenomenon of Divine Mercy, that we do not have to go to a special place to experience it, because we meet God’s Mercy in every sacrament: in the sacrament of penance and reconciliation, where God mercifully forgives our sins, in the sacrament of the Eucharist, where he gives us his life out of his mercy, He nourishes us with his Body and Blood. We can meet God’s mercy in every church. We can meet him first of all in our interior, in our heart, in our inner sanctuary, because God dwells in the heart of every man, even the greatest sinner. Therefore, I wonder why there are such chosen places, there are places that are conducive to prayer, conducive to openness, conducive to meeting God, with oneself, with another man, places that are conducive to pausing in life, which rushes and Christ the King Parish is such a place. People who come here talk about it. People are also looking for places where they will be able to rest from their lives, from the hustle and bustle, noise that prevails in the world, and sometimes from the chaos with which they cannot cope. People who will come to the Shrine of Divine Mercy at Christ the King Church will say that this is the place where they met God.

And that is why I am convinced that God chose this place - the parish of Christ the King in Los Angeles, so that we could proclaim God’s mercy to the world with all our power and strength and prepare the world for Jesus Second Coming.

Fr. George J. Bobowski

Monthly Formation

We invite all to join us at the Divine Mercy monthly formation sessions held at Christ the King Roman Catholic Parish every second Saturday of the month to learn more about the Divine Mercy Spirituality. These coming years we will concentrate on the Apostolic Letter “*Mulieris Dignitatem*” of St. John Paul II on the Dignity and Vocation of Women.

The true dignity of women

We are witnessing extremely lively discussions about women’s rights and dignity. Various programs for women were created, and feminist circles consistently and noisily impose their ideology. Catholic Women and their organizations participate in these discussions, trying in many ways to show the beauty of women’s vocation and to promote their authentic dignity. For them, however, one of the most important questions that they seek answers to is what the Lord Jesus wants, not how the world today feels or understands this issue. Hence it is necessary to bend over the revealed word and seek an answer to the question of how the Master of Nazareth treated women and how he manifested their dignity

The genius of a woman through the eyes of St. John Paul II

Every woman’s vocation is to be loved and to love.

It is common to hear it, not only from left-wing circles, that the Church in her teaching and practice does not appreciate the role of women in the contemporary world. There are also voices which attribute to the Catholic doctrine even depreciation or diminishing the importance of the female sex in the religious space (lack of female priesthood) and social (the ideal of a mother taking care of children and home), allegedly predestine women only to adopt a passive and servant attitude towards men. Whereas the reality looks completely different, which is clearly evidenced by the teaching of St. John Paul II, who even issued a separate document in the rank of an apostolic letter bearing the title *Mulieris Dignitatem* (Dignity of woman) about the dignity of women and their vocation. The Pope did not hesitate, both in this and in many subsequent documents and speeches, to write and speak directly about the “genius of woman”.

To register for the formation
please call:

**The Lay Institute
of Divine Mercy**

Tel: 323/449-9014 – Ms. Lelis
Cruzata, Coordinator

Website: www.timeofmercy.com

E-mail: faustinum@aol.com



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Reservations and Information:

**THE LAY INSTITUTE OF DIVINE
MERCY, INC**

Tel: 323/449-9016

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