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Development of the Worship of Divine Mercy in Poland and Abroad

Divine Mercy is a fundamental subject of the Bible, and is constantly proclaimed in the message of the Church. It is studied by theologians and proclaimed by the Church Preaching Office.¹ The present study focuses on the worship of the Divine Mercy in the forms proposed by St. Faustina Kowalska (Sister Faustina, 1905-1938), according to her private revelations.

On the 50th anniversary of the revelation of the image of the Divine Mercy to Sister Faustina, during a symposium organised by his Eminence Cardinal Franciszek Macharski, the Metropolitan of Cracow, on February, 19th -20th 1981, Fr Różycki gave a lecture in which he analysed the *“forms of devotion and promises related to them”*, as revealed during the private visions of Sister Faustina.² These forms of devotion include: the worship of the image of Jesus the Merciful, Divine Mercy Sunday falling on the next Sunday after Easter, chaplet of Divine Mercy with prayers such as: novena to Divine Mercy, litany to Divine Mercy, and the Hour of Mercy at three o'clock PM – the time of the Saviour's death on the cross - and spreading the worship of the Divine Mercy. In the first part of his lecture, which took the form of a theological analysis of Sister Faustina's private revelations, Fr Różycki explained that, according to the *Saint's Diary*, *“the devotion does not only involve great promises, but also requirements; the most important element of the devotion is, however, the active love of other people.”*³

This shall be the focus of this study. The problem is broad, therefore I will need to limit myself to the selection of the most significant people, congregations and events that have had impact on the development of the worship of the Divine Mercy in Poland and abroad within the recent 60 years.

1. History of the worship of Divine Mercy until World War II (1931-1939)

The *Diary* reads: *“Płock, February, 22nd 1931. In the evening, when I was in my cell, I saw Lord Jesus in a white garment. One hand raised for blessing,*

and the other touched the garment at the chest. From the opening of the garment emanated two rays, one red and the other pale.

I looked at the Lord, while my soul was full of fear and great joy. After a while Jesus said to me: «Paint the image according to the vision you see, with an inscription: Jesus, I trust in You. I want this image to be worshipped in your chapel, and then in the entire world. I promise that the soul who adores this image shall not be lost. I promise the victory over enemies already here on earth, and especially on the hour of death. I Myself shall defend it [the soul] as My Glory.»⁴

...I desire a feast of Mercy established. I want the image painted with a brush to be consecrated on the first Sunday after Easter, and the Sunday is to be Divine Mercy Sunday. I wish the priests to announce My great Mercy to the sinful souls: may sinners not fear approaching Me».⁵

February, 22nd 1931 may thus be assumed as the beginning of the worship of the Divine Mercy, as proposed by Sister Faustina Kowalska.

Sister Faustina was selected by God, yet she was only human and not apt to the mission. The attempts to have the image painted failed. In 1933 she was transferred to the convent in Vilnius, where she met Fr Michał Sopoćko, who, as her confessor, studied her revelations and then employed the artist Eugeniusz Kazimirowski to paint the image of Christ the Merciful according to the penitent's vision. The image, completed in July 1934, did not satisfy Sister Faustina, as it did not show Christ's glory as perceived by her. Her following vision, however, assured her that the Lord approved of that image.⁶

Fr Michał Sopoćko placed the image in the hall of the Bernardine Convent.⁷ Due to Sister Faustina's insistence on placing the image in a church, which she claimed to be a request of Christ, the confessor attempted to obtain the permission from Archbishop Romuald Jałbrzykowski. Failing that, Fr Sopoćko placed the image of Jesus the Merciful in a window of the Pointed Gate as an adornment of a triduum celebrated on April, 26th –28th 1935 at the end of the Anniversary of Redemption before the White Sunday. That Sunday was supposed to become Divine Mercy Sunday, according to Sister Faustina's revelations.

In the light of Canon Law and the special decree of the Congregation of the Holy Office of May, 26th 1936⁸, the approach of Archbishop Jałbrzykowski was consistent. The decree banned all forms of worship resulting from private revelations not approved by the Church. Only three years from the completion of the image, on April, 3rd 1937, Fr Sopoćko received Archbishop's permission to place the painting at St. Michael's Church, where he was the rector.⁹ Before, the Archdiocesan Art Commission approved the painting. On the prospective Divine Mercy Sunday, on the first Sunday after Easter, on April, 4th 1937, Fr Sopoćko consecrated the painting and placed it at St. Michael's Church next to the high altar.¹⁰

Fr Sopoćko had similar problems with introducing the feast of the Divine Mercy. Aware of the reserve against private revelations, Sister Faustina's confessor

prepared a scientific analysis of the subject.¹¹ During the Maryological Congress in Vilnius between 1st and 3rd July 1937, Fr Sopoćko convinced theologians about the need for the worship of Divine Mercy through a special feast, gaining approval and a resolution to be sent to Rome. The Archbishop of Vilnius rejected the resolution taken by the theologians. During a Synod in Częstochowa, the bishops received Fr Sopoćko's study *Miłosierdzie Boże (The Divine Mercy)*, and accused the author of disobedience to the decree of the Holy Office.

Fr Sopoćko visited Sister Faustina in July 1937. She had been transferred in 1936, first to Walendów near Warsaw, and in May that year to the Convent of Our Lady the Merciful in Cracow (Łagiewniki district). During this visit, Sister Faustina gave him her *Diary*, where he found the novena and chaplet of Divine Mercy and a number of adorations of Divine Mercy. These adorations were later assembled in a litany to Divine Mercy by Fr Sopoćko.

After Sister Faustina's death on November, 26th 1938, Fr Sopoćko handed an extensive memorial to the bishops present at the conference of the Episcopate in Częstochowa, where he gave a theological explanation for the need to establish Divine Mercy Sunday. He did not mention Sister Faustina's revelations as such was the request of his bishop. The bishops did not, however, come to any decision on that matter.

Because the *Diary* stated that the prayers had been dictated to Sister Faustina by Christ Himself, Fr Sopoćko wanted to publish them so that the believers may profit from them. The Archbishop's Curia in Vilnius, however, refused the permission to print. He then addressed the Archbishop's Curia in Cracow, and having obtained the permit, published the prayers in 1937. The booklet was adorned with the image of Jesus the Merciful, a copy of Kazimirowski's painting by Ms. Bażukiewiczówna.

The above data shows that the message of Sister Faustina, despite of great help from Fr Sopoćko and her other confessor, Fr Andrasz, faced many obstacles and was implemented very slowly.

2. Development of the worship of Divine Mercy until the publication of *Notification* (1940-1959)

The approach of the Church authorities to the worship of Divine Mercy in the new form changed radically with the outbreak of World War II. The following vision from the *Diary*, dated September, 13th 1935, was read as a forecast of war: "I saw an Angel, the executor of God's anger (...) I asked the angel to refrain from enforcing the punishment for a while, as the world will make penance. (...) In one moment I was in front of the Holy Trinity. I was overwhelmed with the majesty and I could not repeat my plea. Yet at the same moment I felt the power of the Divine Mercy in my soul (...) I started begging God with the words I heard in my soul. When I prayed with these words, I saw that the Angel

was helpless (...) I had never prayed with such inner power as I did then. The words I prayed to God are as follows: Our Eternal Father, I offer You the Flesh and Blood, the Soul and the Divinity of Your precious Son, and our Lord, Jesus Christ, for our sins and the sins of the entire world; for His painful Passion, have mercy for us."¹² Faced with the brutality of the war, people addressed God, asking for His mercy and forgiveness. They used the booklets with prayers to the Divine Mercy, published in Cracow. The Archbishop of Vilnius allowed for a reprint of these prayers in Vilnius, and for their distribution among believers on February, 7th 1940. The devotion to the Divine Mercy was favoured by Passion sermons held by Fr Sopoćko on every Sunday of the Lent. According to Bishop Kisiel, who attended these sermons, many people came to listen, and the priest spoke as if in a mystical fervour and with great power.

These circumstances made the devotion to Divine Mercy very popular among Poles. Through Polish emigrants, the devotion spread outside Poland. That is why I shall discuss the development of the worship to Divine Mercy first in the Polish and then in international context.

2.1. Development of the worship of Divine Mercy in Poland until 1959

In the period discussed, there were two aspects of the worship of Divine Mercy in the new form, namely the popular worship, and the study by theologians and the position taken by the Ecclesiastical Courts Commission.

The popular worship first concerned mainly the image of the Merciful Jesus. People also expressed their enthusiasm towards the novena to Divine Mercy before the White Sunday, the chaplet of Divine Mercy and the litany. The worship spread most vividly in Vilnius, and especially in St. Michael's Church, under Fr Sopoćko's pastoral activity.

Cracow become another centre of worship. Already on March, 7th 1943, in the chapel of the Convent of Our Lady the Merciful, Fr Józef Andrasz consecrated the image of the Merciful Jesus by Adolf Hyla, as a votive for saving his family during the war. Mother Superior, I. Krzyżanowska, ordered a painting from Adolf Hyla, the dimensions of which would suit the side altar. Another painting was ordered by Mother Superior General, M. Moraczewska, from a Lvov painter, Stanisław Batowski. Both paintings were ready by autumn 1943. Cardinal Sapiecha decided that the painting by Hyla should remain at the chapel, while the painting by Batowski was to be transferred to the Church of the Divine Mercy at ul. Smoleńsk.¹³ The new painting by Hyla was consecrated by Fr Andrasz on April, 16th 1944, on Divine Mercy Sunday. Since then, the first Sunday after Easter has always been celebrated at Cracow-Łagiewniki as Divine Mercy Sunday, attended by many pilgrims. In 1951 Cardinal Sapiecha granted a seven-year plenary indulgence to people visiting the place.¹⁴

The spread of the devotion to Divine Mercy in the after-war period was facilitated by the brochures¹⁵ and images, published in large numbers. Such publications popularised the life and revelations of Sister Faustina, and allowed people to pray according to the proposed devotion to Divine Mercy.

With the popular publications for believers, theologians became interested in the subject of the Divine Mercy as revealed to Sister Faustina. The most important studies were produced by: Fr Jacek Woroniecki¹⁶ and Fr Michał Sopoćko.¹⁷ Sister Faustina's confessor also published other studies on the theology and spreading of the worship of Divine Mercy.¹⁸

Theologians gathered at the meeting of the Theological Society in Cracow on April, 8th 1948, made a resolution to establish Divine Mercy Sunday, and addressed it as an appeal to Rome. Professors of theological faculties and seminaries, while approving the resolution, followed the line of the Polish Episcopate which applied to Rome for establishing Divine Mercy Sunday as a Church feast, according to Sister Faustina's revelations. Also, the Vatican Radio broadcast a programme on Sister Faustina and her mission on February, 27th 1948.

As there was no reply to the resolution from Rome, The Chief Commission of the Episcopate addressed Archbishop Jałbrzykowski of the Vilnius archdiocese, residing in Białystok, to comment on the subject. In the reply of November, 30th 1951, the Archbishop described his views on the "*alleged revelations of Sister Faustina from the Convent of Our Lady the Merciful and the devotion to Divine Mercy, propagated by Fr Sopoćko and Fr Andrasz, the Marianie Fathers and others.* In the introduction, the author said: *I love the Divine Mercy and always ask God for it, yet I have a decisively negative approach to the devotion to Divine Mercy as proposed according to the revelations of Sister Faustina, and it is so for various reasons.*"¹⁹ Later the author enumerates the reasons:

1. due to the regulations of the Canon Law, clause 1259 and 1279, which impose great care on a bishop as concerns approval of prayers and religious practices, and especially 'insolitas' images;
2. due to the decree of the Holy Office of May, 26th 1936 concerning the ban on introduction of new forms of worship;
3. due to the improper way of propagating the devotion, which stands in opposition to the spirit of the Church.²⁰

After his release from prison in 1956, the Primate of Poland, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński returned to this issue, addressing a letter to the then Chapter Prelate of the Vilnius Archdiocese in Białystok, Fr Adam Sawicki, in which he asked for a reply in Latin to the following three questions:

1. what was his opinion on the devotion to Divine Mercy,
2. how widely it was spread in his diocese,
3. whether the devotion had been approved by the bishop.

In the letter of February, 24th 1957, addressed to Fr Sawicki, the primate stressed the action had been initiated by the Holy Office. Fr Sawicki ordered this case to be examined by the censor, Fr Antoni Cichoński. On the basis of the latter's opinion of May, 20th 1957, he wrote a reply to the Primate. The author of the report stressed that the issue of the worship of Divine Mercy in the form proposed by Sister Faustina required the authoritative study of the credibility of her private revelations. Under Archbishop Jałbrzykowski and Bishop Sawicki, the worship of Divine Mercy in the form proposed by Sister Faustina had not been popularised on the territory of the Vilnius Archdiocese. It spread spontaneously without the participation of the Ecclesiastical Courts Commission.²¹

In the period discussed, the worship of the image of the Merciful Jesus became a problem. Fr Sopoćko questioned the interpretation of the image given by Fr Andrasz in the brochure *Miłosierdzie Boże, ufamy Tobie!* (Divine Mercy, we Trust in You!). According to this interpretation, the Saviour in a white garment travels the earth as a doctor, healing the sick humanity. That is why the artist Hyla produced many paintings of Jesus against the background of the sea, mountains, flowers, factories, etc., which was not according to Sister Faustina's vision. The Art Commission of the Cracow Archdiocese of June, 29th 1954, decided that "*this should be abandoned due to the feminism unacceptable in the images for worship, and the lack of harmonization with the liturgy of the White Sunday, to which the image should relate*". Such a decision of the Cracow Art Commission was confirmed by the Chief Commission of the Polish Episcopate, which approved the image by prof. Ślędziński on October, 5th 1954.

2.2. Worship of the Divine Mercy in the "new form" outside Poland until 1959

The study by Fr Chróściechowski²² shows that the devotion to Divine Mercy was transferred to the United States and Mexico owing to Fr Józef Jarzębowski, a Marian, who in 1941, during the war, miraculously travelled to the United States through Russia and Japan. Before his leave, Fr Jarzębowski received a memorial on the devotion to Divine Mercy from Fr Sopoćko, with a request to publish it abroad. The memorial was published in Detroit (USA) in 1943 with the status of a manuscript. As early as in 1941, the Felician Sisters in the USA published the novena, litany and chaplet of Divine Mercy in Polish, together with the image of the Merciful Jesus and the introduction by Fr Jarzębowski, entitled *Ojciec Miłosierdzia* (The Father of Mercy, 2000 copies). As the edition was soon sold out and many gratuities were received owing to grace granted for practising the devotion, it was necessary to publish new editions and answer numerous letters. That is why a special office of the Apostolate of the Divine Mercy was opened in the American province of the Marianie Fathers in Stockbridge. Fr Władysław Pełczyński was the first head of the Apostolate.²³

Another direction in which the worship of Divine Mercy spread, was the East, with the Poles sent from Vilnius to Siberia and Kazakhstan. When the Polish army was created in the USSR, and later transferred to the Middle East, Palestine, Italy and other European or African countries, the worship of Divine Mercy spread with the Polish soldiers and their chaplains.

At the end of 1944, Fr Jacek Przygoda, Rector of the Polish Catholic Mission in Belgium, prepared a brochure *Jezu, ufam Tobie!* (Jesus, I trust in You!). In 1945, Fr Franciszek Cegiełka, Rector of the Polish Catholic Mission in France, published the brochure by Fr Przygoda, entitled *Ojciec Miłosierdzia* (The Father of Mercy). Brochures propagating the devotion to Divine Mercy were later published in Germany, England and Australia, mainly for Polish emigrants.²⁴

Since the 1950s, the Pallottini Fathers have played an important role in spreading the worship of Divine Mercy. In France, they published *Modlitwy do Miłosierdzia Bożego* (Prayers to the Divine Mercy)²⁵, a study by Fr Alojzy Misiak, *O Miłosierdziu Bożym. Wyjątki z Dzienniczka Siostry Faustyny* (About the Divine Mercy. Excerpts from Sister Faustina's *Diary*)²⁶, as well as thousands of images and pamphlets on the devotion to Divine Mercy. In 1954, in the USA, Fr Cegiełka published an ample study entitled *Siostra Faustyna, szafarka Miłosierdzia Bożego* (Sister Faustina, Caretaker of the Divine Mercy).²⁷

Together with the Marianie and Pallottini Fathers, the Jesuits, Franciscans, and many Polish émigré priests contributed to spreading the worship of Divine Mercy in many European countries and other parts of the world. The scale of the devotion to Divine Mercy may be defined by the number of language versions in which theological studies and the devotion itself were published. According to Fr Chróściechowski, theological studies by Fr Sopoćko, Fr Woroniecki and others, as well as images with the novena and chaplet or just with the chaplet of Divine Mercy appeared in the following languages: English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, German, and Latin. The devotion itself and the images of the Merciful Jesus were also published in Lithuanian, Latvian, Dutch, Flemish, Czech, Slovak, Ukrainian, Hungarian, Croatian, in several Indian, African and Asian languages, especially of Goa, Singapore, Korea, etc. Winowska, in her study on Sister Faustina, wrote on translations of the devotion and the publications of the image of the Merciful Jesus in about 60 languages and dialects of the world.²⁸

It must be stressed that the publications had the imprimatur of the bishops from the countries concerned.

In spreading the worship of Divine Mercy, as revealed to Sister Faustina, there were many exaggerations and alterations. Popular worship often seeks extraordinariness, and either tries to interpret some promises of private revelation in a too mechanical manner, or give them other meaning than the public revelation in the Church. One may enumerate several easily seen discrepancies:

1. wrong interpretations of the message and the promises, especially related to the celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday;

2. wrong translation of certain formulas from the *Diary*, especially into Italian, French, etc.;
3. Polish priests sometimes interpreted the red and pale rays from the image of the Merciful Jesus as a symbol of the Polish flag.

If one adds to that the forgery of the authority of Primate A. Hlond in editing the prayer for beatification of Sister Faustina and other irresponsible actions of over-enthusiastic people, it is not surprising that the Holy Office issued a document limiting the devotion to the Divine Mercy in the forms proposed by Sister Faustina.

3. Worship of Divine Mercy from the issue of the *Notification* to its revoking (1959-1978)

3.1. The meaning of the document of the Holy Office

On March, 7th 1959, The Congregation of the Holy Office published the following "Notification" in *L'Osservatore Romano*, which was later reprinted in ASS (1959/271):

It is hereby announced that the High Congregation of the Holy Office, having examined the visions and revelations assigned to Sister Faustina Kowalska from the Convent of Our Lady the Merciful, who died in 1938 near Cracow, has decided as follows:

1. distribution of images and writings presenting the devotion to Divine Mercy in the forms proposed by Sister Faustina should be banned;
2. the removal of the above-mentioned images which have already been introduced for worship depends on the judgement of bishops.

Already on March, 15th, the "Priest's Answers" section of *L'Osservatore della Domenica* published an explanation concerning the *Notification*: "*The Divine Mercy triumphs in the entire history of humanity, and it is true that the Holy Bible, and especially the Gospel and the liturgy are as if a constant meditation and praise of the Divine Mercy. The Holy Office by no means intended to condemn the devotion. The reader from Venice, read the Notification of the Congregation of the Holy Office carefully: «...distribution of images and writings presenting the devotion to Divine Mercy in the forms proposed by Sister Faustina should be banned».*"

Despite a repeated explanation of April, 19th 1959, in a similar section, questions kept coming, therefore the "Priest" from *L'Osservatore Romano* dealt with the *Notification* for the third time, yet in a broad form. The explanation of August, 2nd 1959 was given in five points. I shall quote it due to the doctrinal value of the explanation.

- "1. In the above-quoted *Notification*, the Holy Office does not judge the value of Sister Faustina's revelations, at least not clearly, and certainly not her person.

However, it seems to me that the tone of the 'Notification' implicates serious doubts about the visions and revelations.

2. Distribution of images and writings is banned; the believers are not forbidden to keep them at home. However, even within these limits, the ban is a clear warning.
3. The second article of the Notification says: "...the removal of the above-mentioned images which have already been introduced for worship depends on the judgement of bishops".

Let us notice the moderate tone of the statement, which does not forbid anyone to keep these images at home for private reasons (it is yet understood that one cannot propagate or distribute them).

4. It is obvious that the Notification (I need to stress that it has not the form of a Decree as the ones placing a book on the index), is not permanent and the high authority of the Church may later change its judgement. Nevertheless, the believers and the priests would prove arrogant and disobedient if we considered our private judgement as more important than the judgement of the Church. The views of the authors, even serious ones, only have a private value and may not be treated as of the same importance as the decisions of the Holy Office, which has a mandate to defend the heritage of the teaching of the Catholic Church granted by the Pope; which has studied the case carefully, which has the time and wisdom highly exceeding a private author's capacity.
5. The Holy Office did not, actually, condemn the devotion to Divine Mercy, or the worship related to the devotion to the Holy Heart of Jesus (the devotion in this form is sanctified by the tradition and explained wisely in the Encyclical by Pius XI, entitled *Miserentissimus Redemptor – The Most Merciful Redemptor*).²⁹

Sister Faustina presumed that the devotion to Divine Mercy will have difficult moments. She wrote in her *Diary*: "At one moment, when I was talking to the instructor of my soul, I had an inner vision, faster than struck by a lightning, of his soul in great pain, in such Passion that very few souls are touched with this fire by God. The suffering comes out of this deed. There will be a moment where this task requested by God will be as if in complete ruin, and then the Divine acts will occur with great power which will prove it true. It will be a new light for the Church...."³⁰

3.2. Development of the worship to Divine Mercy until the revoking of the Notification (1959-1978)

The *Notification* did not entirely stop the worship of Divine Mercy in the form proposed by Sister Faustina. Priests made adjustments to the directives of the *Notification*. Images were removed from churches, devotion to Divine Mercy was not organised on a large scale. Nevertheless, the believers still observed the practices and sought the ways to express the adoration for the Divine Mercy in a community.

The image remained in the chapel of Our Lady the Merciful (now the Shrine of the Divine Mercy)³¹ in Cracow-Łagiewniki; in a small chapel of the Pallottini Fathers in Częstochowa, in the so-called Valley of the Divine Mercy, in many small chapels and private homes. Believers came to those places privately or in groups, and prayed for the spread of the worship of Divine Mercy in the proper form, complying with the teaching of the Church.

In that period the focus was on a more profound theological grounding of the devotion to Divine Mercy. Many expressions used by Sister Faustina had to be explained, as in the popular language, or unlearned preaching, they could be interpreted in a wrong way. In fact, the ban imposed by Rome did not concern the worship of Divine Mercy, but the abuse, consisting in spreading it in forms devoid of the true theological content, and in sometimes wrongly interpreted revelations.

The attempts to study the theological aspect of the revelations were especially strong in Poland. Owing to the action of Fr Wierzbica, a centre for scientific study of Divine Mercy was founded in Częstochowa, under the name the Study of Divine Mercy. The centre's activities consisted mainly in organising theological symposia focusing on the problem of the worship of Divine Mercy and its essence. First such symposium in Częstochowa referred to *The Dignity of and Need for Divine Mercy* (November 1966); the second concerned the theology of the worship of Divine Mercy (November 1968); the third was about the apostolate understood as man's answer to the calling of the Merciful God (October 1972); the fourth focused on man's responsibility for the world (October 1975); the sixth discussed the relations between the Merciful God and Salvation, eternal life and peace (October 1978). The meetings were attended by theologians from Polish Catholic universities and seminaries, as well as by Cardinal Wyszyński, Cardinal Wojtyła and many Polish bishops.

Materials from the first three symposia were published in print. The subject of the Divine Mercy was specially treated in *Ewangelia miłosierdzia* (Gospel of Mercy) edited by Fr Granat (Pallotinum 1970) and *Bo Jego Miłosierdzie na wieki* (For His Mercy for Eternity; Pallotinum 1972). Both these publications prove a high academic standard of discussions and papers presented at the symposia.

At this time many studies were published also outside Poland.³² One should mention here especially the four-volume study by Fr Sopoćko, entitled *Miłosierdzie Boga w dziełach Jego*³³ (Divine Mercy in His Deeds).

Apart from the continuing popular worship, scholarly studies by the specialists in the Bible, dogmas, and liturgy, and other theologians, the spread of the worship of Divine Mercy was largely influenced by the initiation of the process of gathering information on Sister Faustina Kowalska. After the issue of *the Notification*, at the session of the Second Vatican Council in 1963, the then Archbishop Karol Wojtyła asked Cardinal Ottaviani whether it was possible to start the beatification process of Sister Faustina Kowalska. The Cardinal was to say: "*start as soon as possible as long as the witnesses are alive.*"³⁴ This seems to be true, as in the chro-

nicles of the Convent of Our Lady the Merciful, under the date August, 21st 1965, it was noted that Fr Sopoćko met with the Archbishop, who answered his question concerning the possible diocesan process for Sister Faustina in the following way: *This issue is the most important for me, we may start even this year.*³⁵ On October, 21st 1965, Archbishop Wojtyła gave a decision to initiate the process for gathering information on Sister Faustina Kowalska. As he himself was leaving for the Vatican Council, he made Bishop Julian Groblicki responsible for the issue.³⁶ It is interesting that the Archbishop of Cracow was faithful to the decision of the Holy Office. Through his Postulator, Fr Izydor Borkiewicz, he communicated that he wished that no Mass at the altar of the Divine Mercy, be celebrated every Thursday, as not to give the slightest impression of spreading the worship of Divine Mercy according to Sister Faustina's form, as this would be destructive for the case. We are walking on ice, the Metropolitan said. He also indicated that if it was possible to prove that Sister Faustina's *Diary* had been wrongly translated into Italian, the Holy Office might be willing to revoke the "ban" of 1959, concerning the spread of God in His Mercy, according to the form passed to Sister Faustina. Already on September, 20th 1967, the diocesan process of Sister Faustina Kowalska was completed.

The continuing popular worship to Divine Mercy in the form proposed by Sister Faustina with its positive effects, profound study by theologians, particularly specialists in the Bible and dogma, and finally the initiation of the information process by the Metropolitan of Cracow, Karol Wojtyła, as well as the new expertise of her writings pointing to mistakes in their translation, made the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith revoke the *Notification* of 1959.

4. Spread of the worship of Divine Mercy after revoking the *Notification*

In this section, I shall first discuss the very decree revoking the *Notification*, and then the studies of Polish theologians on the theology and the spread of the worship of Divine Mercy in Poland and abroad. It must be stressed that each of these subjects is suitable for a separate study due to its scope.³⁷ I shall, therefore, only discuss the main actions of certain people and congregations, as well as the chief factors impacting the spread of the worship of Divine Mercy, such as the Pope's Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*, beatification of Sister Faustina in 1993, her canonisation, and the proclamation of Divine Mercy Sunday on the second Sunday of Easter, which has been made binding for the entire Church by John Paul II.

4.1. The *Notification* of April, 15th 1978

The Holy Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith announced the *Notification*³⁸ signed by the Prefect Cardinal Seper and its Secretary Archbishop Hamer on April, 15th 1978, which stated: "There have been questions asked by many parties, especially from Poland, as well as official questions concerning

the sustenance of the ban contained in the Notification of the Congregation of the Holy Office, announced in Acta Apostolicae Sedis of 1959, p. 271, on the devotion to Divine Mercy in the forms proposed by Sister Faustina Kowalska. The Holy Congregation, taking into consideration a number of original documents, unknown in 1959, having deliberated over the changed circumstances, and regarding opinions of many Polish bishops, announces that the bans contained in the above-quoted Notification are no longer binding".³⁹

It is also worth quoting the explanatory answer of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to the Superior General of the Marianie Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who, on behalf of the superior of the American province of St. Stanislaus Kostka from the same congregation, asked for the authoritative explanation of the *Notification* of 1978, revoking the ban on spreading the worship of Divine Mercy in the forms presented by Sister Faustina Kowalska. The Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Franco Seper stated: "*Concerning the case (mentioned in the letter from Father General), I am pleased to inform you that by the means of the Notification of June, 30th 1978 (AAS LXX/1978/p.350), which has matured in the light of the original documentation and owing to the detailed information from the then Archbishop of Cracow, Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, the Holy See has decided to revoke the ban contained in the previous Notification of 1959 (AAS 1959, p. 271). Therefore from the part of the Holy Congregation, it is considered that there is no obstacle in spreading the devotion to Divine Mercy in the authentic forms proposed by the above-mentioned sister*"⁴⁰ (Faustina Kowalska).

4.2. Theological studies of the problem of the Divine Mercy after 1978

Three factors caused a special interest of theologians in the subject of the Divine Mercy, namely: revoking of the *Notification* of 1959 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1978, publication of the Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* by Pope John Paul II (on November, 30th 1980), and the beatification of Sister Faustina by John Paul II on the Second Sunday of Easter 1993.

In Poland, the centres especially active in that respect involved the Cracow Shrine of the Divine Mercy (Convent of the Sisters of Our Lady the Merciful in Cracow-Łagiewniki), the centre of the Pallottini Fathers in the Valley of Divine Mercy in Częstochowa, and the centre in Białystok-Gorzów around the new Congregation of the Sisters of the Merciful Jesus.

In Cracow-Łagiewniki, between the February, 19th and 20th 1981, on the 50th anniversary of the revelation of the image of the Divine Mercy to Sister Faustina, a symposium was organised under the protectorate of Cardinal Franciszek Macharski. At this symposium, Fr Różycki presented a lecture on "The Divine Mercy. Main features of the devotion to Divine Mercy" ("Miłosierdzie Boże. Zasadnicze rysy na-

bożeństwa do Miłosierdzia Bożego”). In the introduction, Fr Różycki stated: “The author of the theological study that follows must confess that for over a quarter of a century he had profound doubts as to the heroic sanctity of Helena-Faustina, and especially the revelations with which, as she said, she had been honoured. The author considered himself justified to think in that manner through what he had learnt from the people «cognizant» of the case of Helena-Faustina.

According to the author, Helena-Faustina, a simple and religious girl, was a victim to a hysterical hallucination, and therefore not only her revelations were devoid of any religious value, but also her heroic life was a lost case. This superstition caused a categorical refusal of the author’s participation as an expert theologian in the beatification process of Sister Faustina, opened by Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, Archbishop of Cracow in 1965. The decisiveness of this negative approach began to waiver when simple human curiosity led the author to the pages of the Diary – just as a leisure activity. His opinion was shaken by this casual reading, later repeated as a careful and methodical study, in the result of which the author became convinced that the case of Helena-Faustina deserved a scientific study. Such a study, third one already, ultimately assured the author that:

1. the information from the «cognizant», which previously shaped the negative approach, proved incomplete, inexact, or even false;
2. the sanctity of Helena-Faustina is truly heroic, and her revelations bear all the marks of supernatural origin;
3. the author, having become convinced to the highest level of the academic certainty – has a responsibility to testify it in writing.

Thus performing this task, the author presents this fruit of his work to the Boundless and Eternal Mercy Incarnate, to express gratitude for all grace, and pray for forgiveness of sins.”⁴¹ The note by Fr Różycki proves the importance of the thorough theological study of the writings and the life of Sister Faustina.⁴²

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Sister Faustina’s revelations, between April, 24th and 26th 1981, the Pallottini Fathers organised a congress in Częstochowa on the forms of worship of the Divine Mercy. Another such congress took place in Częstochowa between April 26th and 28th 1984 on the Divine Mercy in the theological and pastoral aspects. Materials from that congress were published in ‘Biuletyn Miłosierdzia Bożego’ (Parts I and II) No 14, with the status of a manuscript. The third congress in Częstochowa took place between October, 1st and 5th 1988, under the motto: “In the service of the Divine Mercy”, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Sister Faustina’s death.

Sisters of the Merciful Jesus, considering the congregation to have been created on God’s will, as expressed in Sister Faustina’s revelations, published three volumes of theological studies on the worship of Divine Mercy in the forms proposed by Sister Faustina.⁴³ Theologians, specialists in the Bible, Patrology, Pastoralism, dogma, history, liturgy, etc., who published their work in the volumes quoted,

mainly represent the academic societies from Poznań, Białystok and Gorzów Wielkopolski.

The convent of the Sisters of Our Lady the Merciful in Cracow-Łagiewniki (The Shrine of the Divine Mercy) has been a dynamic centre spreading the worship of Divine Mercy. The convent organised scientific symposia, especially conferences, devotions, indulgencies and various forms of worship of the Divine Mercy. The Shrine has been attractive not only because of the painting by Adolf Hyla in a side-altar, but most of all because of Sister Faustina's tomb, which is the place of prayers of many people, also coming as pilgrims from Poland and foreign countries.

Due to the 50th anniversary of Sister Faustina's death, the Sisters of the Shrine of the Divine Mercy, under the patronage of Cardinal Franciszek Macharski, organised a national symposium for the worshippers of the Divine Mercy between October, 6th and 7th 1988; and later, under the patronage of the same Cardinal Metropolitan of Cracow, they organised a symposium focused on the spirituality and the worship of Divine Mercy, as well as Sister Faustina and the current status of the beatification process of God's servant. For three days, from October, 18th to 20th, the participants of the symposium participated in four or five lectures, a mass and the Hour of Mercy. The rich materials from the symposium show the broad scope of the worship of Divine Mercy in the forms proposed by Sister Faustina.⁴⁴

Academic symposia were especially organised at the Shrine of the Divine Mercy in Cracow-Łagiewniki after Sister Faustina's beatification in 1993. Between October, 5th and 6th 1995 there was a symposium on Divine Mercy Sunday.⁴⁵ In February 1996, the centre at Cracow-Łagiewniki organised the next symposium on the Apostolic Movement of the Divine Mercy.⁴⁶

The Institute of the Divine Mercy, founded by Fr Sopoćko and Fr Leon Nowak, has had a great influence on the spread of the worship of Divine Mercy. The Institute was approved by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński and presently is active mainly in Toruń, Łódź and Katowice. It is supervised by the Jesuit Fathers.

The greatest impulse for learning the mystery of the Divine Mercy was the Encyclical of John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*. The Pope did not make any allusion to the private revelations of Sister Faustina, but the Biblical content, and the pastoral aspect show broad dimensions and the authenticity of the revelations.

In the "Preface" to the *Diary*, Cardinal Deskur wrote: "*The recently announced encyclical by Pope John Paul II, Dives in Misericordia fortunately focused the attention of the Church and even the secular world on the singular attribute of God, and simultaneously the extraordinary aspect of the economy of Salvation, which is the Divine Mercy.*"

It would be desirable, continues the author, to perform a thorough study aiming at showing the common ground between Sister Faustina's Diary and the quoted Encyclical, without mentioning the possible interdependence. This common ground must be vast, as it comes from the same source, namely from the Divine Revelation and the teaching of Christ. Moreover, it comes from

the same spiritual environment, from Cracow, the only town, to my knowledge, which has the oldest church of the Divine Mercy. It must be stressed that Cardinal Wojtyła himself, as Archbishop of Cracow, initiated the action for the beatification process of Sister Faustina and started the process."⁴⁷

Theologians started working on the encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*. It has been exemplified by the number of symposia and the publications in Polish.⁴⁸ It is, however, difficult to find a theological study with a topic proposed by Cardinal Deskur. Students at Polish and foreign Catholic universities chose the problems mentioned in *Dives in Misericordia* as subjects of their MA and BA dissertations. And thus the Papal Faculty of Theology in Wrocław produced one BA and four MA dissertations by 1986; the University of Catholic Theology – one MA dissertation; the Papal Faculty of Theology in Cracow – two MA dissertations, while the universities in Rome produced three doctoral and one MA dissertation. By the year 2000, over 100 academic studies on Sister Faustina's spirituality, her revelations and the theology of the Divine Mercy have been produced.⁴⁹

4.3. Worship of Divine Mercy in Poland between 1978 and 2000

The worship of Divine Mercy in Poland developed dynamically after the revoking of the *Notification* of 1959, and after the election of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła as Pope. Certain directions in development may be listed, such as dynamic publishing and worship activities at the centres which so far had focused on the preparation of the beatification of Sister Faustina, as well as by convents and congregations which had taken Sister Faustina's message as one of their evangelical missions. The preparation of the beatification and canonisation was the responsibility of the Cracow Archdiocese and the Sisters of Our Lady the Merciful. However, the message of the Divine Mercy was also undertaken by the Marianie Fathers, the Pallottini Fathers, and the Sisters of the Merciful Jesus, founded by Fr Sopoćko as a spiritual will of Sister Faustina.

4.3.1. The beatification and canonisation process of Sister Faustina Kowalska

The devotion to Divine Mercy in the form proposed by Sister Faustina had been spreading in Vilnius since 1940, and later at the Convent of the Sisters of Our Lady the Merciful at the Cracow-Łagiewniki centre. Two years after Sister Faustina's death, her heroic sanctity was not discussed. The interest in Sister Faustina arose on healing of Barbara Kłosówna owing to Sister Faustina's intercession. Mother Superior, M. Moraczewska, addressed Cardinal Hlond with the problem of Sister Faustina's worship. On January, 9th 1947, she received a reply: "*Gather documents, collect materials, so that everything is ready when the time comes.*"⁵⁰ On July, 15th 1947, Mother Superior notified the Primate that she had given in-

structions to collect data concerning Sister Faustina. The period of testimonials lasted from June, 6th 1952 to April, 5th 1965.

The initiation of the process was not, however, delayed. As early as 1951, Mother Superior addressed the General of the Pallottini Fathers with a request to appoint the postulator. On May, 22nd 1951, Fr General Wojciech Turowski appointed Fr Stanisław Suwała to perform this function. In the same year the Holy See became interested in spreading devotion to Divine Mercy. The concern of the Holy Office was caused mainly by a wrong translation of the *Diary* into Italian and French; while the Polish re-typed text contained many mistakes suggesting that Sister Faustina required the worship of her own heart; interpretation of the rays as the Polish flag, etc. Another claim referred to certain texts from Fr Andrasz's booklet, which suggested a protestant interpretation of the justification.

It seemed that the issue of the *Notification* in 1959 would decisively hamper the beatification of Sister Faustina. Yet, after the death of Archbishop Baziak the issue was taken over by Archbishop Karol Wojtyła, and after the conversation with Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he initiated the process on October, 21st 1965. Fr Izydor Borkiewicz was appointed as the postulator. There were 75 sessions and 46 witnesses were interviewed, writings were collected, and the process was held to exclude any public worship. The exhumation of Sister Faustina's corpse occurred a year after the initiation of the process, on November, 25th 1966.

On September, 26th 1967, the diocesan process of Sister Faustina was completed. The files were sent to Rome on January, 24th 1968.

On February, 18th 1967, Fr Antoni Mruk was appointed the Postulator General in Rome, and the Congregation for the Causes of Saints confirmed the nomination on October, 4th 1967. The decree of January, 31st 1968, initiated the beatification process of Sister Faustina at the Congregation.

One of the conditions for the performance of the beatification process consisted in the publication of Sister Faustina's *Diary*. It was published in Rome in 1981 with *Nihil Obstat* (No objections) by Fr Ignacy Różycki of April, 17th 1979 and the imprimatur of Cardinal Franciszek Macharski of April, 18th 1979. On March, 13th 1979, the Holy Office had appointed Fr Różycki a censor, as he was a theologian who had prepared the review of the *Diary* and knew the content of the document very well.⁵¹

The miraculous healing of Maureen Digan from Lee, Massachusetts (USA)⁵² in 1981 was confirmed.

The beatification of Sister Faustina was performed in Rome by John Paul II on April, 18th 1993, on the second Sunday of Easter, that is on Divine Mercy Sunday.

On December, 20th 1995, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints announced the miraculous healing of Fr Ronald Pytel of Baltimore, on Sister Faustina's intercession.

The canonisation of Sister Faustina was performed by John Paul II on April, 30th 2000, at the same time the second Sunday of Easter was announced as Divine Mercy Sunday.

Postulates coming to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints during the period of preparation for the beatification and canonisation of Sister Faustina prove the dynamics and popularity of the worship of Divine Mercy in the forms proposed by the Saint.

4.3.2. The Shrine of the Divine Mercy at Cracow-Łagiewniki

The Convent of the Sisters of Our Lady the Merciful in Cracow-Łagiewniki and the church with the famous image of the Merciful Jesus and the relics of Sister Faustina, form the most important Shrine of the Divine Mercy. Since Sister Faustina's beatification about a million pilgrims have been coming here annually. The constant inflow of pilgrims from Poland and the world has been explained by the Pope, during his visit to the Shrine on June, 7th 1997, in the following words: *"Nothing is as much needed as the Divine Mercy – this generous and compassionate love which raises man over his weakness towards the boundless heights of Divine sanctity. At the Shrine of the Divine Mercy we become aware of that in a special way, as this was the source of the Message of the Divine Mercy, which Christ Himself wished to pass on to our generation through the Blessed Sister Faustina."*

The Association of the Apostles of the Divine Mercy *Faustinum* was founded by the Metropolitan of Cracow, Cardinal Franciszek Macharski on March, 6th 1996, as a separate church entity.⁵³ The Association gathers the apostles of the Divine Mercy from 24 countries.⁵⁴ The Association's objective is *"to aspire at Christian perfection through trust in God and mercy towards other people; study and proclamation of the mystery of the Divine Mercy; a plea for Divine Mercy for the entire world, especially for sinners, as well as priests and religious orders."*⁵⁵

Since 1987, the Shrine has been publishing a quarterly *"Oreǳie Miłosierdzia"* (The Message of Mercy). Apart from information on the Shrine, it contains materials on the spirituality of the Divine Mercy.⁵⁶ No 34 (No 2/2000) is devoted to the canonisation of Sister Faustina. The popularisation of the Message of the Divine Mercy is facilitated by publications and brochures published in eight languages, video and audio cassettes, as well as the Internet.⁵⁷

A historical breakthrough was the initiation of the construction of the Basilica of the Divine Mercy on the territory of the present Shrine in Cracow-Łagiewniki. The model of the church designed by Professor Witold Cęckiewicz was blessed by John Paul II during his stay at the Shrine in 1997. He also consecrated the foundation stone which comes from the Golgotha.⁵⁸ On September, 22nd 1999, after two years of preparation, Cardinal Franciszek Macharski consecrated the construction site.⁵⁹ In the lower church, four chapels have been designed in order to allow for

simultaneous mass in four languages at the Hour of Mercy. The upper church has been designed to house 5000 pilgrims. The needs of the pilgrims will be met by the House of Merciful Pastoralism, built simultaneously, which will house various kinds of counselling centres for people in need of spiritual health.

4.3.3. Shrine of the Divine Mercy in the Valley of the Divine Mercy in Częstochowa

The Canonical erection of the house of the Pallottini Fathers in Częstochowa at ul. Kordeckiego 49, was performed on November, 26th 1948 by the then General, Fr Wojciech Turowski. The chapel with the image of the Divine Mercy was consecrated on December, 18th 1949 by Bishop Teodor Kubina. During the celebration, the Bishop said: *“May this place serve the Divine Mercy in the shade of the Lady of Jasna Góra. May everyone who visits this church experience the Divine Mercy in a very special way.”*

On the initiative of Fr Stanisław Wierzbica, the Secretariat for the Divine Mercy was created in the Valley of the Divine Mercy. The Secretariat organises symposia for theologians, congresses in honour of the Divine Mercy, formation symposia for the animators of the movement, as well as publishes *“Biuletyn Miłosierdzia Bożego”*. Particular issues of *“Biuletyn”* contain information on congresses, symposia, and the news on the activities of the Movement of the Worshippers of the Divine Mercy in various regions of Poland.

On the eve of Divine Mercy Sunday, on April, 25th 1992, Archbishop of Częstochowa, Stanisław Nowak, issued a decree (signed on March, 30th 1992) in which he established the parish church of the Divine Mercy as the Shrine of the Divine Mercy.⁶⁰

4.3.4. Shrine of the Divine Mercy in Myślibórz

The congregation founded in 1942 by Fr Michał Sopoćko in Vilnius was to realise Sister Faustina’s will concerning a new congregation. After the war, Fr Sopoćko had to leave Vilnius and sought a place for it. Due to help from Fr Władysław Wantuchowski, who was responsible for the spiritual formation of the first sisters, the Apostolic Administrator in Gorzów Wielkopolski, Fr Edmund Nowicki, issued a permit for the sisters’ activity and work in the Gorzów district. The sisters selected Myślibórz as their dwelling place, and on August, 25th 1947, first six sisters began their life in the community. On August, 2nd 1955, the administrator of the Gorzów diocese, Fr Zygmunt Szelażek, issued a decree allowing the sisters to wear habits.⁶¹

The decree of August, 1st 1993, issued by Archbishop Marian Przykucki of the Szczecin-Kamień Archdiocese, established the Shrine of the Divine Mercy in Myślibórz. The decree states: *“Approving the application of Fr Marian Kucharczyk, from the parish of the Holy Cross in Myślibórz, and Mother Superior of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Merciful Jesus, Sister Józefa Misarko, perceiving the*

arguments presented as satisfactory, I hereby establish the Church of the Holy Cross and the chapel of the Sisters of the Merciful Jesus, where the relics of the Blessed Sister Faustina are preserved, as the Myślubórz Shrine of the Divine Mercy."⁶²

The Myślubórz Shrine of the Divine Mercy, based at ul. Bohaterów Warszawy 77, is open to pilgrims coming in groups and individually.

The Shrine organises national meetings of the worshippers of the Divine mercy. It remains in touch with the leaders of the Divine Mercy groups based in Poland, such as centres in Szczecin, Szczecinek, Koszalin, Piła, Warsaw, Cracow, Nasielsk, Inowrocław, Łódź, as well as foreign centres in Germany, Canada, United States, Australia, Denmark, Norway, Argentina, Brazil, Belarus, Lithuania, Slovakia, Czech Republic and other.

4.3.5. Worship of the Divine Mercy in dioceses

The pastoral letter of Cardinal Metropolitan Franciszek Macharski for the Lent 1985 reads: *"I advise that the Cracow Archdiocese should celebrate and honour the Divine Mercy on the second Sunday of Easter, with preservation of all the rules and liturgical texts."* The example of the Cracow Archdiocese was followed by other Polish dioceses, but not all. Therefore it is interesting to study the status of the worship of the Divine Mercy in the forms proposed by Sister Faustina first in the Polish aspect, and then abroad.

As a preparation to the third congress on the Divine Mercy, which took place in Częstochowa between October, 1st and 5th 1988, Bishop Kisiel prepared a questionnaire concerning the status of the worship of the Divine Mercy in particular churches and congregations, and sent it to particular dioceses and three congregations. The answers came from 18 out of 27 Polish dioceses.

The results are inspiring. It appeared that the image was in possession of 1620 churches and chapels, of which 480 churches and chapels were in the Cracow Archdiocese. The three congregations: Sisters of the Merciful Jesus, the Marianie Fathers and the Pallottini Fathers adored the image in 40 churches and chapels. In the 18 dioceses, the devotion to the Divine Mercy was celebrated in 826 churches. The White Sunday (second Sunday of Easter) was celebrated as Divine Mercy Sunday in seven dioceses. Finally, the novena before the White Sunday and the chaplet of Divine Mercy were said in 1589 churches or chapels.⁶³

Although the results of the survey do not give a full picture of the worship of the Divine Mercy in Poland, they show the positive attitude of the priests and believers, as well as the popularity of the worship in Cracow, Białystok, Częstochowa, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Katowice, Kielce, Przemyśl, Radom, Sandomierz, Siedlce, Szczecin, and Warsaw dioceses. No answers came from eight dioceses.

The survey did not encompass all the religious orders. The Convent of the Sisters of Our Lady the Merciful was especially omitted, as it is the centre of the worship, because Sister Faustina belonged to that congregation.

The development of the worship of Divine Mercy in Poland after the beatification of Sister Faustina Kowalska can be easily checked when analysing the schemes of the Polish dioceses between 1998 and 2000. One may see how many new churches bear the name of the Divine Mercy. And thus the number of parish churches bearing the name of the Divine Mercy in particular dioceses is as follows: Białystok – 2, Cracow – 12, Przemyśl – 6, Szczecin-Kamień – 4, Bielsko-Żywiec – 4, Kielce – 3, Pelplin – 2, Radom – 5, Sosnowiec – 3, Tarnów – 7, Warmia – 3, Zielona Góra-Gorzów – 6.

Some of the dioceses have also established shrines of the Divine Mercy, including: Częstochowa – the Valley of Mercy, Cracow-Łagiewniki, Warsaw-Ożarów Mazowiecki, Kalisz, or Szczecin and Myślibórz in the Szczecin-Kamień diocese.

The spreading worship of the Divine Mercy in Poland has become a foundation for the application of the Polish Episcopate of March, 23rd 1993, to the Congregation of the Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments concerning the establishment of Divine Mercy Sunday as a national feast. The Congregation replied in the decree of January, 23rd 1995: *“In reply to the application presented by Polish Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops in the letter of March, 23rd 1993, His Holiness John Paul II, kindly agreed for the Polish dioceses to add to the name ‘the Second Sunday of Easter’ the words ‘or Divine Mercy Sunday.’ At the same time he advised that for the liturgy of that Sunday, the texts designed for the day in the Roman Psalter and the Breviary be used.”*⁶⁴

4.4. Current status of the worship of Divine Mercy in the world

The documentation on the development of the Divine Mercy in the world is difficult to present in full. The Marianie Fathers from the Stockbridge centre (Massachusetts, USA), the province of St. Stanislaus Kostka, seem to be well informed, which is testified by the study of Fr Chróściechowski⁶⁵, yet this study concerns the period between 1931 and 1975. I have received a lot of help from the Sisters of Our Lady the Merciful in Rome, from Sister Waleria Krysiak. The period of the recent 15 years has been well described in the data I have received from the main centres of the worship and from people who study the history of the devotion to Divine Worship, such as: Sister Elżbieta Siepak from the Shrine of the Divine Mercy in Cracow-Łagiewniki; Fr Bart from the Centre of the Spirituality of the Divine Mercy at Chiesa di S. Spirito in Sassia (Rome); Fr Seremak from Lublin⁶⁶; Vice-Provincial of the Marianie Fathers of the Polish province, Antoni Skwierczyński; and the Mother Superior of the Sisters of the Merciful Jesus in Gorzów Wielkopolski, Maria Kalinowska.

Although I shall discuss the countries from which the source materials concerning the worship of the Divine Mercy as proposed in Sister Faustina’s revelations were available, translations of the devotion testify that the worship reaches almost all the places where the image of the Merciful Jesus with the inscription *Jesus*,

I trust in You! appears. An example for the spread of the worship may be found in the number of pilgrims who came to the Shrine of the Divine Mercy in Cracow-Łagiewniki in 1997; they came from the countries like: Austria, UK, Ireland, Germany, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Italy, France, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Lithuania, Ukraine, Russia, and non-European countries like the USA, Canada, Argentina, Mexico, Uruguay, Paraguay, Japan, Thailand, Singapore, Uganda, India, Australia, etc.⁶⁷ The establishment of Divine Mercy Sunday on the second Sunday of Easter by Pope John Paul II on April, 30th 2000, confirmed the universal character of the worship in the entire Church.

4.4.1. Africa

In Africa, the worship is popularised by the Carmelites and Pallottini Fathers, the Marianie Fathers and many missionaries from Poland or other European countries.

In **Rwanda**, the Pallottini Fathers have been popularising the worship of the Divine Mercy in Kansi since 1993. All the Pallottini parishes conducted missions on the Divine Mercy. Pallotti-Press published the image of the Merciful Jesus with the inscription *Yezu Ndakwizera* (Jesus, I trust in You). Other publications included a booklet containing the characteristics of the devotion with the novena and the chaplet in the Kinyarwanda language. A large painting (4 metres) of the Merciful Jesus was hung in the Kansi parish church. Gradually, the devotion to the Divine Mercy at 3 PM became customary. The civil war destroyed these achievements for some time. Nowadays, the spirituality of the Divine Mercy becomes the refuge for people devastated by violence.⁶⁸ For the dying, it was the source of strength and courage to comfort brutality.

In **Tanzania**, in Kiabakari (Musoma diocese), Fr Wojciech Kościelniak from the Cracow Archdiocese built a church on the Hill of Divine Mercy. The Bishop of Musoma, Justin Samba, granted it the status of a diocesan Shrine of the Divine Mercy. Members of the diocese had already known the devotion to Divine Mercy and said the chaplet of Divine Mercy in Swahili.⁶⁹

On the **Ivory Coast** in Yamoussoukro, in the largest Basilica of Our Lady of Peace, there is a crypt with the image of the Merciful Jesus.⁷⁰

In **Zambia**, in 1990, Fr Jakub Rostworowski started working in Lusaca in the Church of St. Ignatius. He found evidence of the worship of Divine Mercy. He published 5000 copies of the image of the Merciful Jesus with the text of the chaplet of Divine Mercy. He distributed the image, taught how to say the chaplet, and consecrated three paintings of the Merciful Jesus.⁷¹

4.4.2. America

In the **United States**, as early as 1941, Fr Józef Jarzębowski initiated the worship of Divine Mercy. The worship spread dynamically until 1959, but with certain oddities. The time of the ban introduced with the *Notification* of 1959 allowed for

clearing the worship from various additions and oddities, owing to the activity of the Marianie Fathers, and especially Fr Julian Chróściechowski and Fr Stanisław Michalenko – a Marian, Vice-Postulator for Sister Faustina's beatification on behalf of America, who as the Secretary General of the Marianie Fathers resided in Rome. The popularisation of the worship consisted in publishing activities in Stockbridge. In 1981, the centre published the *Diary of Sister Faustina Kowalska of the Convent of the Sisters of Our Lady the Merciful*, with the preface by Archbishop A. Deskur, and introduction by Fr Jerzy Mrówczyński – Vice-Promotor of the Faith in the Information Process. A Shrine of the Divine Mercy has existed in Stockbridge (Massachusetts, USA) Since 1985. The Marianie Fathers, who service the Shrine, also publish materials promoting the worship of Divine Mercy. These include mainly the prayers to Divine Mercy, images of the Merciful Jesus, magazines, such as *Marianie Helpers Bulletin* (issue of 1,200,000 copies), *Róże Maryi* (10,000 copies) and other. The film about the Divine Mercy has been watched by several thousand people, and 11,000 copies of video cassette have been sold. Every week, there is a TV programme on the Divine Mercy and pilgrimages to the Shrine of the Divine Mercy.

In the 1990s, an important role in popularising the worship of Divine Mercy in the United States and Mexico belonged to Paweł Niedźwiedzki, who, driven by the inner voice, distributed the image of the Merciful Jesus in 60 parishes and pastoral centres, which undertook to implement the worship. The characteristic feature of this action consisted in the fact that he visited the parishes on foot, proposing small copies of the image of the Merciful Jesus, and later provided them with large paintings, designed for public worship. He described his pilgrimage in a book, which testifies to the spiritual power of a man devoted to Christ.⁷²

In **Canada**, the Canadian Centre of the Divine Mercy has been operating near Ottawa since spring 1993. The aim of the centre is to organise retreats based on the worship of Divine Mercy. The group gathers 7000 people. The members go to parishes of the entire country, suggesting the worship of Divine Mercy in the forms proposed by Sister Faustina.

The group from the Canadian Centre of the Divine Mercy has its rules based on the texts of Sister Faustina's *Diary*, and the rule of Mother Theresa of Calcutta, designed for the Order of Missionaries of Charity.⁷³ The group is directed at charity and is spiritually linked with the Sisters of the Merciful Jesus in Gorzów Wielkopolski.

In **Mexico**, Fr Józef Jarzębowski, who brought the message of Mercy to the USA, initiated the devotion to Divine Mercy as early as in 1943. He came there to carry the worship of the Merciful Jesus to Polish war orphans.

In the Puebla diocese, Archbishop Rosendo Huesca is the propagator of the devotion to Divine Mercy. 40 parishes participate in popularising the message of Mercy. In 1996, Archbishop Huesca founded the International Centre of the Divine Mercy in Puebla. The Centre aims at assisting in spreading the authentic message

of the Merciful Saviour in the spirit of the teaching of John Paul II, not only in Mexico, but also in Latin America.⁷⁴

In 1984, Mexican students brought from Poland two full-size images of the Merciful Jesus. Jerzy Skoryna sent applications to the Primate of Mexico, Cardinal Ernesto Corripio Ahumada for enthroning the image of the Merciful Jesus in Mexico Cathedral. The Cardinal devoted one of the chapels to the worship of the Merciful Jesus. During the Pope's second visit in Mexico, he received the statue of the Merciful Jesus cast in bronze. The Pope offered the statue to Bishop Jose Maria Hernandez Gonzalez from the new diocese in Nezahualcoyotl. The bishop first placed the statue in a private chapel. Later, however, he decided to build a new cathedral dedicated to the Divine Mercy and to have the entire diocese commended to the Divine Mercy.⁷⁵

The centre of the worship of Divine Mercy in Mexico is situated in Tenango del Aire.⁷⁶

Puerto Rico learnt about the devotion to Divine Mercy from American priests who had studied in Rome, and lived at the College of St. Nepomucen where Sisters of Our Lady the Merciful work. After their return to Puerto Rico, their started popularising the devotion, which they had learnt in Rome.

In the **Netherlands Antilles** the devotion to Divine Mercy was popularised by Bishop William Michel Ellis of the Willemstad diocese. On the 50th anniversary of the consecration of the church on Wishi Island, and simultaneously on the 50th anniversary of Sister Faustina's first revelations (February, 22nd 1931), Bishop Ellis gave the church a new name of the Divine Mercy. The celebration took place on September, 27th 1981, and the church has had the name of the Divine Mercy and St. Theresa since. Also, since that time, every Friday at 3 PM, the local radio station broadcasts the devotion to Divine Mercy on the territory of Curacao and the Netherlands Antilles.⁷⁷

Brazil owes the worship of Divine Mercy to the work of the Marianie and Pallottini Fathers, as well as many other priests of Polish origin. Brazil has its centre of the Apostolate of the Divine Mercy in Rio de Janeiro⁷⁸, at the parish of the Divine Mercy, as well as in Curitiba and other towns. The Pallottini Fathers from the parish of the Divine Mercy in Rio de Janeiro deal with publishing materials related to the worship of Divine Mercy, including novenas, chaplets, images, medallions and prints.⁷⁹ There are also prayer and charity groups consisting of secular people, focused on the worship of Divine Mercy.

In **Argentina**, in Mendoza, the worship of Divine Mercy was originated by Amelia Bertolini, a pianist, who learnt the devotion in Rome. She initiated a group of worshippers of Divine Mercy under the name of *Ora de Jesus Misericordioso*. The worship of Divine Mercy has been developing under the protectorate of Archbishop Candido Rubiolo since 1985. The image of the Merciful Jesus was imported from Rome and hung in Mendoza cathedral. In a special chapel of the Merciful Jesus, there are systematic devotions according to the formula given by Sister Fau-

stina. Also in Buenos Aires, there is the worship of Divine Mercy at Colegio del Salvatore, under the protectorate of Fr Luis Kukovic.

On the basis of correspondence coming to the Postulation in Rome, it may be stated that the devotion to Divine Mercy develops in the following American countries: **Guatemala, Panama, Venezuela, Honduras** and other.

4.4.3. Australia and Oceania

The correspondence held by the Sisters of the Merciful Jesus with Zygmunt Grabowski from Melbourne, shows that the worship of Divine Mercy in the forms proposed by Sister Faustina came to Australia together with Polish emigrants after World War II. The issue of the 'Notification' of 1959 withheld the development of the worship of Divine Mercy for 20 years. Since the 1980s, the image of the Merciful Jesus has been worshiped by an increasing number of people, and the chaplet to the Merciful Jesus is said in a number of parishes.⁸⁰

The Association of the Divine Mercy has existed in Wagga Wagga diocese since 1993. The group gathers 5000 people from 14 countries.

4.4.4. Asia

Fr Antoine Gemayel, Director of the Catholic Centre in **Lebanon**, translated Sister Faustina's *Diary* into Arabic. He handed the text to the Pope during his visit at the Shrine of the Divine Mercy in Cracow-Łagiewniki in 1997. According to the translator, the translation aims at facilitating the idea of the Divine Mercy, in the forms proposed by Sister Faustina, to the Arabic-speaking Christians and Muslims.⁸¹

In the **Philippines** the popularisation of the worship of Divine Mercy was started in 1985 by Fr Dan de Castro. The Vicar General of Manila is the protector of the worship. He himself consecrates the paintings and leads the devotion. It is worth stressing that in the Philippines, once a month the TV broadcasts a programme prepared by Fr Dan de Castro, and at 3 PM radio and TV stations participate in the Hour of Mercy. Many people from the Philippines come to the shrine in Cracow Łagiewniki.

In **India**, in Madras the book *Jesus, I trust in You* was published. Every year a new edition of it is printed.

South Korea also has a translation of the book *Jesus, I trust in You* in Korean, published in 1984.

In **Japan** the worship of Divine Mercy in the forms proposed by Sister Faustina is known and practised.

In **Kazakhstan**, in Petropavlovsk, on September, 12th 1999, the Church of the Divine Mercy was consecrated. The celebration was performed by Bishop Jan Paweł Lenga.

In **Siberia**, the Pallottini Fathers publish a magazine *Vestnik Miloserdija*. According to Fr Frąckiewicz, the magazine is also bought and read by members of the Orthodox Church.⁸²

4.4.5. Europe

As concerns **Italy**, Fr Renato Tisot of Arco (Trento diocese) provided broad information on the development of the worship of Divine Mercy in Italy since 1978. Fr Tisot is a great propagator of the worship. Together with Fr Carlo Vivaldelli, he organised a penance mass in front of a large image of the Merciful Jesus during the national meeting of the Renewal in the Holy Spirit movement in Rimini. It was attended by over 12,000 people. They experienced the sacrament of penance in a profound way due to the explained significance of the devotion to Divine Mercy. The copies of the image were later given to parish churches. This meeting originated prayer groups. Especially, Fr Francesco Rachelli devoted himself to the Divine Mercy. He distributed the copies of the image of the Merciful Jesus and founded the retreat centre at Montegrotto. He died in 1978, yet his followers continue his work.

Another important activist was Fr Obaldo Biagoli at the Crocette parish, Castelfidarno. In the years 1983-84, in his parish, he organised missions with visits of the image of the Merciful Jesus at homes, and consecrated 800 paintings with the image of the Merciful Jesus.

In 1985, Archbishop of Trento, Alessandro Maria Gottardi, appointed Fr Renato Tisot as the head of the "O Sanctissima" retreat house. The house has become an active centre of the worship of Divine Mercy, which gathers almost 1000 people in the *Dives in Misericordia Community*. The aim of the Community is to spread the worship of Divine Mercy, not only through the forms of devotion postulated by Sister Faustina Kowalska, but also to study the Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* by John Paul II, for correct shaping of the worship and for a more profound understanding of its essence.

In 1988, a new Divine Mercy centre was opened in Centurano di Caserta. It was founded by Fr Primo Poggi, who remains in touch with Fr Tisot and the Trento centre.

Presently, the main Centre of the Spirituality of the Divine Mercy is based at Santo Spirito Church in Rome, near the Vatican. In the decree of January, 1st 1994, the Vicar of Rome, Cardinal Camillo Ruini wrote: "*There are various reasons for the S. Spirito in Sassia to become the place from where the calling for the Divine Mercy should rise. For those reasons I state that the S. Spirito in Sassia should spread the spirituality of the Divine Mercy.*"

Between October, 1st and 3rd 1999, Complesso Ospedaliero di Santo Spirito in Rome housed the first National Symposium on the Divine Mercy. The Symposium was organised by Centro della Divina Misericordia in Rome, with the premises at Santo Spirito in Sassia in Rome. Materials from the symposium were later published in print.⁸³ The materials from the symposium are the fundamental source of information on the development of the worship of Divine Mercy in Italy.⁸⁴

A characteristic form of spreading the worship of Divine Mercy in Italy is the peregrination of the image of the Merciful Jesus to parishes and religious orders which wish it. The action was initiated by Fr J. Bart, the parish priest of Santo Spirito Church and the custodian of the Shrine of the Divine Mercy in Rome. A several-day visit of the image of the Merciful Jesus in a parish or religious order ends with the initiation of the celebration of the chaplet of Divine Mercy and the Hour of Mercy by the community.⁸⁵

In **Germany** the Sekretariat of Sister Faustina, is led by Ms M. Hanke, has been working since 1987.⁸⁶ The images, brochures and books on the Divine Mercy have been published here. The Association of the Polish Catholics in Germany publishes 'Polonia semper Fidelis' bulletin. In the issue 6-7/11988/1-8, year X, the focus is on the worship of Divine Mercy among the Polish emigrants in West Germany. The main worship centre is situated in Westfalen 4420 Coesfeld – Lette, Im Grossen Esch, and is managed by Fr Stanisław Świdziński. Józef Pfanzelt from Rettenbach near Augsburg popularises the worship among secular people. The Association of the Polish Catholics in Germany has been taking part in popularising the worship since 1984. On November, 25th 1984, Fr Waclaw Tokarek, the first Association's church assistant, consecrated the image of the Merciful Jesus in a Polish parish in Dortmund, in the presence of 500 people. The Society popularises the worship at the Polish Masses in Vluyn and Kaldenhausen, as well as in the retreat house at Moers-Kapellen, where the closed retreats are organised for the Association members. Jan Sponder is a great activist popularising the worship of Divine Mercy, as 45 years ago he experienced a special instance of grace from the Divine Mercy during the pacification of Liszki near Cracow on July, 4th 1943.

In **France**, the Pallottini Fathers have been spreading the worship of Divine Mercy from the centre at Paris-Osny. Fr Alojzy Misiak has devoted much work into these activities.

In 1993, after a 35-year break, the magazine *Messenger de la Misericorde Divine* was reactivated. In 1997, on Divine Mercy Sunday, the Pallottini Fathers Centre at Osny celebrated the reception of parts of Sister Faustina's relics. The celebrations were headed by the Nuncio in France, Cardinal Taglieferi, who consecrated 50 paintings with the image of the Merciful Jesus at the end of the Mass, which were designed for worship in churches, chapels and religious orders in France.⁸⁷

In **Spain**, in Catalonia, a group of the Divine Mercy has been working at Sant Jaime Church in Barcelona since the 1980s.

In **Portugal**, Fr Stanisław Szymański, a Marian working in Lisbon, has been spreading the worship of Divine Mercy. According to his relation given to Bishop Kisiel, there is the Apostolate of the Divine Mercy in Balsamao, as well as the worship of the Merciful Jesus in His image. Writings by Fr Sopoćko and Fr Andrasz on the Divine Mercy have been published, as well as the images, medallions and prayers to Divine Mercy. Between April, 14th and 19th 1998, before Divine Mercy Sunday, a symposium on the Divine Mercy was organised in Balsamao. A number of lectures were presented, after which many problems were discussed referring to the worship of

Divine Mercy in the forms proposed by Sister Faustina. Divine Mercy Sunday was celebrated by a number of pilgrims despite bad weather.⁸⁸ Apart from Balsamao, there is a centre for the worship of Divine Mercy in Lisbon, founded by the Association of the Secular Catholics under the name 'Renew Everything in Christ.' Members of this movement meet once a month during a Mass and pray to the Divine Mercy.

Letters sent from **England and Ireland** show that there are many centres of the worship of Divine Mercy in the forms proposed by Sister Faustina in England and Ireland. Apart from secular people, the Marianie Fathers are dynamic in publishing and pastoral activities.

Other European countries worshipping the Divine Mercy include Yugoslavia, the former USSR and especially Lithuania.

In the **Czech Republic**, the centres of the worship of Divine Mercy in Brno and other towns remain in touch with the Polish centres. Worshipers of Divine Mercy from the Czech Republic come to the shrine in Cracow-Łagiewniki, to the Valley of the Divine Mercy in Częstochowa, and to Myślubórz. The *Diary* has been translated into Czech language.

The **Hungarians** have received a translation of Sister Faustina's *Diary* in their language. The translation from Polish, done by Marta Trojan and Eva Koncz, was published in 1998 in the edition of 4000 copies.⁸⁹

The Pallottini Fathers are building a Church of the Divine Mercy at Spisska Nova Ves of the Smizany parish in **Slovakia**, and since 1997 have been publishing the magazine *Apostol Bozieho Milosrdenstva*.⁹⁰ A translation of the *Diary* into Slovak was published in January 1999.⁹¹

Also in **Belarus**, the Pallottini Fathers have been spreading the worship of Divine Mercy. Presently, a church of the Divine Mercy is being built in Voronov.⁹²

In **Sweden**, a group of worshippers of the Divine Mercy has been meeting regularly at the parish of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Malmö since 1995. Similar groups operate in Boras and Göteborg.⁹³

A panoramic view of the development of the worship of Divine Mercy in the forms proposed by Sister Faustina testifies to its universal character and shows that it is the perfect answer of the Merciful God the Father to the needs of modern man. Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*, No 11-12, discusses the sources of anxiety in the modern world. As the Pope says: "*In the relation of our generation to such image... the words come back to us, which sounded in Mary's Magnificat on the Incarnation of the Son of God: the words speaking of «mercy which lasts from one generation to another».*"⁹⁴ The turn towards the Divine Mercy, necessary in the teaching of John Paul II, coincides with the calling to humanity's trust in God, expressed in Sister Faustina's message: "*I send you to the entire humanity with My Mercy.*"⁹⁵

Expectations of the suffering people, who fall under the burden of evil, turn towards God, the only defender of man against sin, the only Victor over Satan.

Sister Faustina's revelations present a new aspect of meeting these expectations, as they show the true profundity of trust in God, the power coming from it, and the active love of other people.

Notes:

¹ Cf. Documents: Leon XII *Tametsi Futura Prospicientibus* (On Redemption), September, 1st 1900; St. Pius X *E Supremi Apostolatus Cathedra* (explanation of the motto: 'Renew everything in Christ'), October, 4th 1903; Pius XI *Miserentissimus Redemptor* (On the Worship of the Holy Heart of Lord Jesus), May, 8th 1928; *Caritae Christi Compulsi* (On begging prayer to the Heart of Lord Jesus), May, 3rd 1932; Pius XII *Haurietis Aquas* (On the worship of the Holy Heart of Lord Jesus), May, 15th 1956; John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia* (Rich in Mercy), November, 30th 1980.

² Cf. Fr I. Różycki *Zasadnicze rysy nabożeństwa do Miłosierdzia Bożego*, Kraków 1982, Second Edition 1985, Stockbridge, 1984.

³ Cf. Fr Różycki, *Zasadnicze rysy...*, Kraków 1982, p. 21.

⁴ Sister Faustina Kowalska, *Diary*, 47-48. Further on, I shall use the abbreviation D. for *Diary*.

⁵ D. 49-50.

⁶ D. 313.

⁷ Fr J. Chróściechowski MIC, *Historia nabożeństwa do Miłosierdzia Bożego w naszych czasach*, London 1975, third ed., p. 88.

⁸ Cf. Bp E. Kisiel, *Bóg – Ojcem miłosierdzia*, "Biuletyn Miłosierdzia Bożego", 1984, No 14, p. 57.

⁹ Cf. Fr Chróściechowski MIC, op.cit. p. 89.

¹⁰ Presently the painting can be found in Vilnius, at the Church of the Holy Spirit, where the services for Poles are held.

¹¹ First he published *Miłosierdzie Boże*, Wilno (Vilnius) 1936, and then a book *Idea Miłosierdzia Bożego w liturgii*, Poznań 1937.

¹² D. 474-475.

¹³ Cf. Sister E. Siepak ZMBM, *Rozwój kultu Miłosierdzia Bożego w Krakowie-Łagiewnikach* (typescript, p.1)

¹⁴ Cf. Sister E. Siepak ZMBM, op. cit., p. 1.

¹⁵ Cf. Fr J. Andrasz *Miłosierdzie Boże, ufamy Tobie!*, Stockbridge 1948; Fr M. Sopoćko *Miłosierdzie Boże nadzieją ludzkości*, Wrocław 1948; Fr M. Sopoćko, *Godzina święta, nowenna o Miłosierdzie Boże nad światem*, Poznań 1949.

¹⁶ Fr J. Woroniecki OP, *Tajemnica Miłosierdzia Bożego. Nauka chrześcijańska o miłosierdziu Bożym i o naszej wobec niego postawie*, Kraków 1945, Second ed. 1948.

¹⁷ Fr M. Sopoćko, *De Misericordia Dei deque eiusdem Festo Instituendo*, Warszawa 1947.

¹⁸ *O Święto najmiłosierniejszego Zbawiciela*, Poznań 1947; *Poznajemy Boga w Jego miłosierdziu – Rozważania o miłosierdziu Bożym na tle litanii*, Poznań 1949; *Godzina święta o miłosierdziu Boże nad światem*, Warszawa 1949.

¹⁹ Cf. Bishop E. Kisiel, *Bóg – Ojcem miłosierdzia*, “Biuletyn Miłosierdzia Bożego”, 1948, No 14, pp. 56-57.

²⁰ Bishop Kisiel, op. cit., p. 57.

²¹ Bishop E. Kisiel, op. cit., pp. 57-58.

²² Fr J. Chróściechowski MIC, *Historia nabożeństwa do Miłosierdzia Bożego w naszych czasach*, London 1975, third ed. Actually, this edition was published in 1977, after the death of the author (he died on July, 7th 1976). Chapter 9 of the book is entitled *Development of the Devotion to Divine Mercy in America and the World in the Years 1941-1958* (pp. 99-118).

²³ Cf. Fr J. Chróściechowski MIC, *Historia...*, pp. 102-103.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 106-107.

²⁵ By 1955 three editions had been published in the total number of 100,000 copies.

²⁶ Paris 1955, 10,000 copies.

²⁷ Published in Tonawanda, N.Y. 1954.

²⁸ *Droit à la Misericorde*, Paris 1958, p. 11.

²⁹ Cf. Fr J. Chróściechowski MIC, *Historia...*, pp. 119-122.

³⁰ D. 378.

³¹ Archbishop Baziak ordered to leave the painting in its place and not to prevent prayers there; he also decided to continue the celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday.

³² Cf. Fr J. Chróściechowski MIC, *Historia nabożeństwa do Miłosierdzia Bożego w naszych czasach*, London 1975, Third Edition, pp. 131-143.

³³ Fr M. Sopoćko, *Miłosierdzie Boga w dziełach Jego*, vol. I, London, Veritas. 1958; vol. II, Roma-Paris-London, 1961; vol. III, Paris 1962; vol. IV ed. “Nasza Rodzina” Paris, 1966.

³⁴ Cf. M. Winowska, *Prawo do miłosierdzia. Posłannictwo Siostry Faustyny*, Paris 1974, p. 9.

³⁵ Cf. *Kalendarium życia Karola Wojtyły*, Kraków 1983, p. 239.

³⁶ Cf. *Kalendarium*, p. 241.

³⁷ It must be stressed that the study of the subject would not have been possible without broad source materials given to the author by Sister Elżbieta Siepak, Shrine of the Divine Mercy, Cracow-Łagiewniki; Fr Seremak from the shrine of the Pallottini Fathers; Vice-Provincial of the Marianie Fathers, Antoni Skwierczyński; Mother Superior of the Sisters of the Merciful Jesus, Sister Maria Kalinowska; and many other competent people.

- ³⁸ Cf. AAS LXX/1978 p. 350.
- ³⁹ Cf. *Dzienniczek Dodatek do przypisów* (The Diary. Addition to footnotes.), p. 683, Kraków 1981. It is worth stressing that the document revoking the ban on the worship of April, 15th 1978 was signed by the Prefect of the Congregation, Cardinal Seper and his secretary, Archbishop Hamer; while the *Notification* of 1959 was signed only by the notary Ugo D'Flaherty.
- ⁴⁰ Cf. *Dzienniczek Dodatek do przypisów*, p. 684, Kraków 1981.
- ⁴¹ Cf. Fr I. Różycki, 'Miłosierdzie Boże. Zasadnicze rysy nabożeństwa do Miłosierdzia Bożego,' Kraków 1982, pp. 33-34.
- ⁴² Fr I. Różycki presented the Congregation for Canonisation Issues with a statement of another theologian to *Positio super scriptis* of Sister Faustyna Kowalska (Helena-Faustyna). It was published in *Sacra Congregatio pro causis Sanctorum* (P. No 1123), *Cracovien, beatificationis et canonisationis servae Dei Faustinae Kowalska Instituti Sororum B.M.V. a Misericordia (1905-1938) Positio super scriptis*. Roma 1980, pp. 65-540. The translated part of the text *Positio super Scriptis* was published in Polish under the title *Nabożeństwo do Miłosierdzia Bożego*, Kraków 1999. The translation includes: Author's introduction confessing his initial doubts concerning Sister Faustina's revelations (pp. 65-66), introduction to the study of the entire *Diary* and on the *Devotion* (pp. 344-446).
- ⁴³ *Posłanie Miłosierdzia Bożego*, Gorzów Wielkopolski, vol. I 1981, vol. II 1983, vol. III 1985.
- ⁴⁴ Cf. *Posłannictwo Siostry Faustyny. Sympozjum o Miłosierdziu Bożym*, Kraków-Łagiewniki, 18-20 V 1988, Kraków 1991.
- ⁴⁵ Cf. *Święto Miłosierdzia Bożego. Materiały z Sympozjum*, Kraków 1996.
- ⁴⁶ Cf. *Apostolski Ruch Miłosierdzia. Materiały z Sympozjum*, Kraków 1996.
- ⁴⁷ Cardinal A. Deskur, *Przedmowa do pierwszego wydania* (Preface to the first edition) in *Dzienniczek. Miłosierdzie Boże w duszy mojej*, Warszawa 1993, p. 7.
- ⁴⁸ *Encyklika Ojca Świętego Jana Pawła II o Bożym Miłosierdziu "Dives in misericordia". Tekst i komentarz*, ed. by Polskie Towarzystwo Teologiczne. Kraków 1981. *Miłość Miłosierna*, Wrocław 1985 (set of lectures presented during Wrocław Pastoral Days XIII).
- ⁴⁹ Sister E. Siepak ZMBM, *Rozwój kultu...*, p. 3.
- ⁵⁰ Fr A. Mruk SJ, *Beatyfikacja Sługi Bożej S. Faustyny Kowalskiej* (typescript, p. 18).
- ⁵¹ Fr A. Mruk, op. cit., p. 32.
- ⁵² Fr A. Mruk, op. cit., pp. 41-45.
- ⁵³ Cf. Sister E. Siepak ZMBM, *Sanktuarium Bożego Miłosierdzia w Krakowie*, Kraków 1999, p. 41 and following.
- ⁵⁴ Cf. Sister E. Siepak ZMBM, *Sanktuarium...*, p. 43; L. Wołosiuk, *Sanktuarium Miłosierdzia Bożego*, "Posłannictwo Św. Antoniego z Padwy", 2000, No 3, pp. 32-34.
- ⁵⁵ Cf. Sister E. Siepak ZMBM, *Sanktuarium...*, p. 41
- ⁵⁶ For subscription address: ul. Siostry Faustyny 3, 30-420 Kraków, phone/fax: (+48 12) 267 61 01.

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- ⁵⁷ Cf. Sister E. Siepak ZMBM *Rozwój kultu...*, pp. 2-3.
- ⁵⁸ Fr A. Sawulski, *Każdy będzie blisko*, "Przewodnik Katolicki", 2000, No 18, p.16.
- ⁵⁹ Sister E. Siepak ZMBM, *Budowa rozpoczęta*, "Orędzie Miłosierdzia", 2000, No 33, p. 8-9.
- ⁶⁰ Cf. Fr W. Seremak SAC, *Dzieje Doliny Miłosierdzia w Częstochowie i jej wkład w rozwój kultu Miłosierdzia Bożego w Polsce i za granicą*, "Biuletyn Miłosierdzia Bożego", XVI, 1992, No 31, pp. 94-101.
- ⁶¹ Cf. *Ból niedowierzania*, Szczecin 1993, pp. 34-43.
- ⁶² Cf. *Ból niedowierzania*, Szczecin 1993, p. 5 and following.
- ⁶³ Cf. E. Bishop Kisiel, *Stan kultu Miłosierdzia Bożego w Polsce oraz perspektywy jego rozwoju*, in: *Wobec tajemnicy Bożego Miłosierdzia*, Poznań 1991, pp. 103-110.
- ⁶⁴ Cf. *Dekret w sprawie nabożeństwa do "Miłosierdzia Bożego" dla Polski*, in: *Święto Miłosierdzia Bożego*, Kraków 1996, p. 105.
- ⁶⁵ Cf. Fr J. Chróściechowski MIC, *Historia nabożeństwa...*, op. cit.
- ⁶⁶ Fr W. Seremak worked in the Valley of the Divine Mercy in Częstochowa for a longer period of time and wrote a doctoral dissertation on the Divine Mercy.
- ⁶⁷ Cf. "Orędzie Miłosierdzia", 1977, No 24, p. 25.
- ⁶⁸ Cf. Fr J. Waligórski SAC, *W sercu Afryki*, "Apostoł Miłosierdzia Bożego", 1995, No 3(7)1995, pp. 15-16.
- ⁶⁹ Cf. M.K., *Sanktuarium Bożego Miłosierdzia w Tanzanii*, "Orędzie Miłosierdzia", 1999, No 31, p. 19.
- ⁷⁰ Cf. S. Skuza SAC, *Sanktuarium w Yamoussoukro. Bazylika Matki Bożej Pokoju*, "Apostoł Miłosierdzia Bożego", 1995, No 3(7).
- ⁷¹ Cf. Fr J. Rostworowski SJ, *Jezu, ufam Tobie*, "Orędzie Miłosierdzia", 1991.
- ⁷² Cf. P. Niedzwiedzki, *1800 mil z Jezusem*, Kraków 2000.
- ⁷³ Sister M. Kalinowska SMJ, *Ostatnie 15 lat rozwoju kultu Miłosierdzia Bożego* (typescript of May, 10th 2000, p.3).
- ⁷⁴ *Miłosierdzie Boże w świecie*, "Róże Maryi", 1999, No, 2 (621), pp. 11-12.
- ⁷⁵ J. Soryna, *Katedra i diecezja w Meksyku pod wezwaniem Miłosierdzia Bożego*, "Apostoł Miłosierdzia Bożego" 1999, No 1 (21), pp. 6-8.
- ⁷⁶ Fr Z. Lewandowski, *Apostołowie Miłosierdzia Bożego, które nie zna granic...*, "Apostoł Miłosierdzia Bożego", 1999, No 3(23), p. 13.
- ⁷⁷ Fr L. Kamiński SDB, *Posłannictwo bł. Faustyny na Antylach Holenderskich*, "Róże Maryi", 1999, No 2(621), p. 13.
- ⁷⁸ Cf. Fr J. Sopicki SAC, *Sanktuarium Miłosierdzia Bożego*, "Miejsca Święte", 2000, No 5(41), pp. 26-27.

- ⁷⁹ They also publish the magazine “Rios de Divina Misericordia”, Cf. “Apostoł Miłosierdzia Bożego”, 1995, No 4(8), pp. 23-24.
- ⁸⁰ Sister M. Kalinowska SMJ, *Ostatnie 15 lat rozwoju Miłosierdzia Bożego* (Typescript of May, 10th 2000)
- ⁸¹ Sister M.S. Musiał ZMBM, *Dzienniczek po arabsku* (interview with Fr Antoine Gemayel), “Orędzie Miłosierdzia”, 1999, No 32, pp. 8-9.
- ⁸² Fr J. Frąckiewicz, *Apel z Syberii*, “Apostoł Miłosierdzia Bożego”, 1997, No 3(15), p. 20.
- ⁸³ *Il Culto della Divine Misericordia nella prospettiva del Grande Giubileo. Tertio Millenio Adveniente. Atti del Convegno*, Centro di Spiritualita della Divina Misericordia, Roma 2000.
- ⁸⁴ The lectures which are especially important for learning about the history of the worship of Divine Mercy in Italy include: Don J. Bart, *Introduzione del Convegno*, pp. 10-11; Don R. Tissot, *Dio tende la sua mano all'uomo d'oggi*, pp. 12-41; P. L. Caravello, *La prima diffusione del messaggio della “Divina Misericordia” in Italia*, pp. 42-50; Don P. Poggi, *La risposta dell'uomo all'invito del Padre Misericordioso* pp. 51-58; Anna di Cesare, *Diffusione del Messaggio della Divine Misericordia attraverso una rete di evangelizzazione*, pp. 59-65, in: *Il Culto della Divina Misericordia...*, op. cit.
- ⁸⁵ Sister E. Siepak ZMBM, *Z Jezusem Miłosiernym w Trzecie Tysiąclecie*, “Orędzie Miłosierdzia”, 1997, No 23, pp. 6-7.
- ⁸⁶ Schwester Faustine Sekretariat, M. R. Hanke, Postfach 1323-D 59916 Brilon.
- ⁸⁷ Cf. “Orędzie Miłosierdzia”, 1997, No 23, p. 24.
- ⁸⁸ Cf. “Orędzie Miłosierdzia”, 1998, No 27, p. 24.
- ⁸⁹ Cf. “Orędzie Miłosierdzia”, 1998, No 28, p. 24.
- ⁹⁰ *Kostol Bozieho Milosrdenstva*, “Apostol Bozieho Milosrdenstva”, 1998, No 5, pp. 4-7.
- ⁹¹ Cf. “Orędzie Miłosierdzia”, 1999, No 30, p. 25.
- ⁹² Fr W. Sutkowski, *List z Woronowa*, “Horyzonty Misyjne”, 1999, No 3 (8).
- ⁹³ Sister M. Kalinowska SMJ, *Ostatnie...* p. 3.
- ⁹⁴ John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*, Introduction to Chapter VII: “Divine Mercy in the Message of the Church.”
- ⁹⁵ D. 1588.

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