

Sr. M. Elżbieta Siepak O.L.M.



A GIFT FROM GOD FOR OUR TIMES



Introduction

Apostle of Divine Mercy, Prophet of Our Times, Great Mystic, Mistress of Spiritual Life – these are the epithets usually appended to the name of Sister Faustyna Kowalska, St. Faustyna (Faustina), of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. Sister Faustina is one of the Church's most popular and widely known saints. She is generally associated with goodness and mercy, and an exceptionally strong power of intercession with the Divine Majesty. Her writings are read both by scholars and ordinary people for the depth of her union with God and the mystery of His Merciful Love for Man, which is portrayed in her *Diary* through her personal mystical experience. Her school of spirituality finds a following not only in those who discover in themselves the charism of spreading God's Merciful Love in the world, but also those who have lost

their way and are trying to find a light in the darkness and hope for a better, more meaningful life.

Sister Faustina's principal task was to pass on to the Church and world the Message of Mercy, a recapitulation of the Biblical truth of God's Merciful Love for every human being, and a calling to each of us to entrust our lives to Him and to actively love our neighbour. Jesus not only revealed the depth of His Mercy to St. Faustina, but also gave her new forms of worship: the picture inscribed *Jesus, I trust in You*, the Feast of Divine Mercy, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, and the Prayer in the Hour of His Death on the Cross, the Hour of Mercy. To each of these forms of worship, as well as to the preaching of the message of Mercy through the testimony of our life, works, words, and prayer, He attached great promises, on condition that we put our trust in His will and show mercy to our neighbours. In his book *Memory and Identity* the Holy Father John Paul II wrote that in the age of totalitarianisms Sister Faustina became the ambassador of the message that the only power strong enough to counteract their evil is the truth of God's Mercy. He called her *Diary* "a Gospel of Mercy written from a 20th-century perspective," which has helped people to survive the extremely painful experiences of these times. "This message," Pope Benedict XVI

has said, “the message of Mercy as the Divine Power, as God putting a check on all the world’s evil, is indeed the chief message precisely for our times.”

This book shows St. Faustina’s life and mission in a simple and straightforward way on the basis of source materials from the archives of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. It has been written in response to the needs of the pilgrims who come to the Shrine of the Divine Mercy at Łagiewniki, Kraków, for those who wish to learn about the “Gift of God for our times,” as John Paul II has called Sister Faustina.

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