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MEETING WITH THE SICK - VISIT TO THE SHRINE OF DIVINE MERCY - ADDRESS TEXT

Kraków – Lagiewniki, 27 May 2006

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am very pleased to be able to meet you during my visit here to the Shrine of Divine Mercy. I extend heartfelt greetings to all of you: to the sick, their carers, the priests engaged in pastoral ministry at the Shrine, to the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, to the members of the “Faustinum” and to all those present.

On this occasion we encounter two mysteries: the mystery of human suffering and the mystery of Divine Mercy. At first sight these two mysteries seem to be opposed to one another. But when we study them more deeply in the light of faith, we find that they are placed in reciprocal harmony through the mystery of the Cross of Christ. As Pope John Paul II said in this place: “the Cross is the most profound bowing down of the Divinity towards man ... the Cross is like a touch of eternal love on the most painful wounds of humanity’s earthly existence” (17 August 2002). Dear friends who are sick, who are marked by suffering in body or soul, you are most closely united to the Cross of Christ, and at the same time, you are the most eloquent witnesses of God’s mercy. Through you and through your suffering, he bows down towards humanity with love. You who say in silence: “Jesus, I trust in you” teach us that there is no faith more profound, no hope more alive and no love more ardent than the faith, hope and love of a person who in the midst of suffering places himself securely in God’s hands. May the human hands of those who care for you in the name of mercy be an extension of the open hands of God.

Benedict XVI