

# DIVINE MERCY —TIMELINE—

AUG. 25, 1905

Helena Kowalska, the future St. Faustina, is born on a small farm in Glogowiec, Poland, the third of 10 children.

1912

Seven-year-old Helena hears the voice of God during prayer and feels the stirrings of a religious vocation.

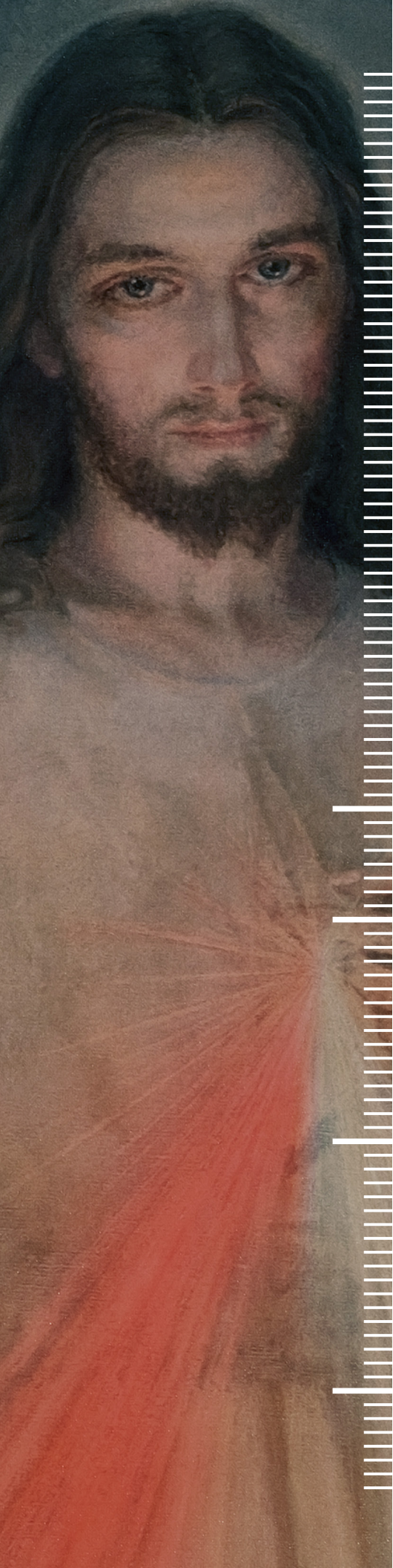
1924

Helena, 19, is at a dance in Lodz, Poland, when she has a vision of the crucified Christ. He asks how much longer she'll put off her vocation, and she leaves immediately to prostrate herself before the Blessed Sacrament at the Cathedral of St. Stanislaus Kostka. In prayer, she hears a voice telling her to enter a convent in Warsaw. She obeys and leaves that night, asking her sister to say goodbye to their parents for her.



AUG. 1, 1925

After a difficult period of being turned away by several convents, Faustina is accepted as a lay sister into the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. In order to pay for her religious habit, she works as a housemaid for nine months.



APR. 30, 1926

Helena Kowalska receives her habit and takes the name Sister Maria Faustina of the Blessed Sacrament.

FEB. 22, 1931

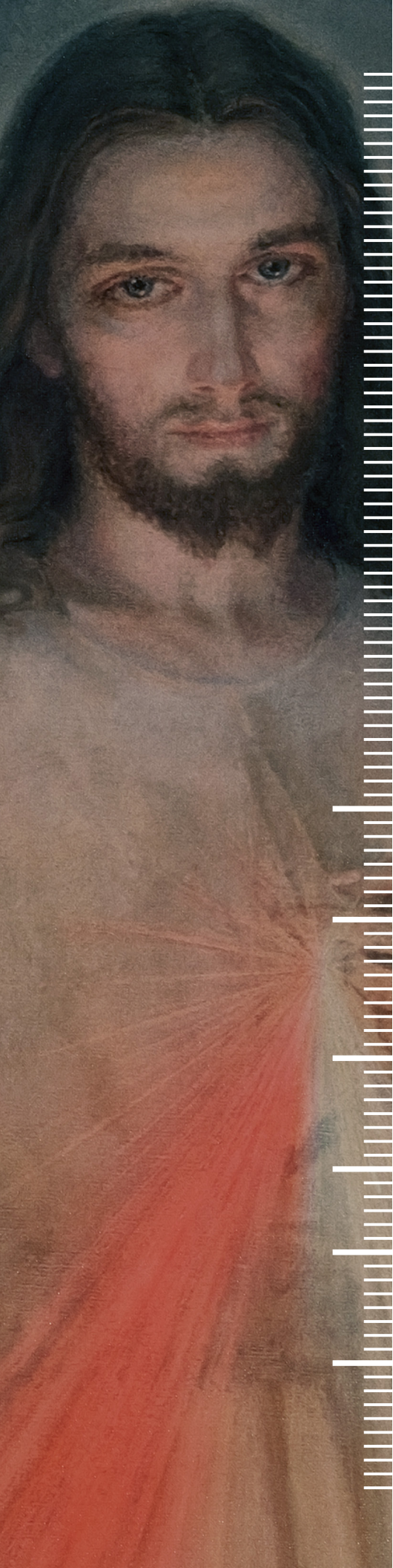
Jesus appears to Sr. Faustina, dressed in white and raising his right hand in blessing as red and pale rays stream from his heart. She records His words to her in her diary: "Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: 'Jesus, I trust in You.'" He asks that it be publicly venerated, promising that souls who venerate it "will not perish." He also says that the first Sunday after Easter should be marked as the Feast of Mercy.

JUNE 1934

The painting is finally completed in Vilnius, where Sr. Faustina had been transferred. She's deeply disappointed in the finished work, complaining in prayer that artist Eugene Kazimirowski failed to capture Christ's beauty in her vision. God responds, "Not in the beauty of the color nor of the brush lies the greatness of this image, but in My grace." The painting is displayed in a convent near St. Michael's Church in Vilnius, where Sr. Faustina's spiritual director, Fr. Michael Sopocko, is rector.

JULY 1934

Under obedience to Fr. Sopocko, Sr. Faustina begins to keep a diary in order to record her ongoing visions of Jesus. The same summer, her already poor health begins to deteriorate.



1937

Holy cards and pamphlets of the Divine Mercy Image are printed and distributed as the devotion gains popularity.

1938

In April, Sr. Faustina is moved to sanitarium in Pradnik, where her visions intensify even as her health weakens. By September, Fr. Sopocko visits and finds her in spiritual ecstasy despite her suffering.

OCT. 5, 1938

Sr. Faustina makes her final confession and dies at 10:45 p.m., at the age of 33.

OCT. 7, 1938

Sr. Faustina is buried in her convent's cemetery.

MARCH 6, 1959

Based on a faulty translation of Sr. Faustina's diary, the Holy Office at the Vatican issues a ban on the Divine Mercy devotion.

OCT. 21, 1965

Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, Archbishop of Krakow, opens an investigation of Sr. Faustina's life and virtues and the theological basis of the Divine Mercy devotion.

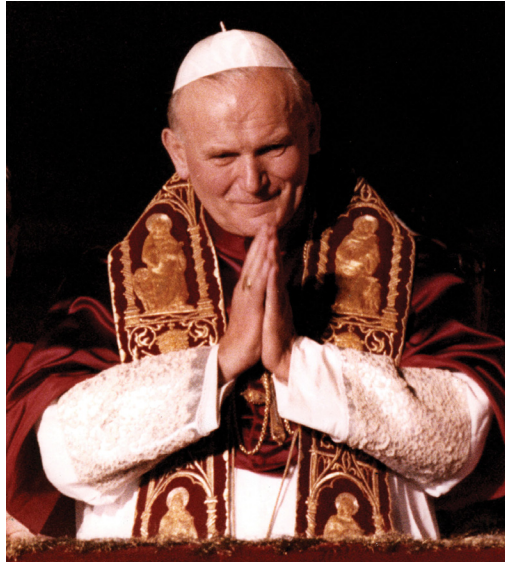


JAN. 31, 1968

Cardinal Wojtyla sends his positive findings on Sr. Faustina's life to Rome, and the process of her beatification begins.

APR. 15, 1978

The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith – the renamed Holy Office – reverses the ban and declares no “impediment to the spreading of the devotion to The Divine Mercy.”



OCT. 16, 1978

Cardinal Wojtyla becomes Pope John Paul II.

NOV. 30, 1980

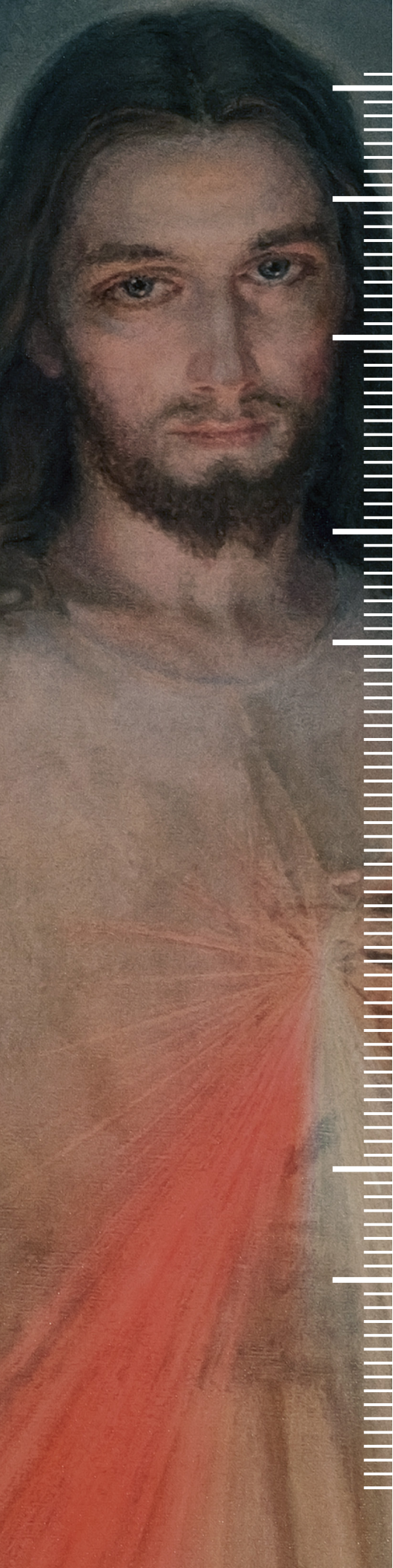
Pope John Paul II's second encyclical, *Dives in Misericordia* (“Rich in Mercy”), examines the role of God's mercy in the modern world. He exhorts the Church to intercession, so that God's love and mercy will be poured out upon the world and make itself known as “more powerful than evil: more powerful than sin and death.” The pope later said that he felt very spiritually close to St. Faustina while writing the encyclical.

MARCH 1981

Maureen Digan of Massachusetts reports that she was healed of her decades-long struggle with Lymphedema, including numerous operations and a leg amputation. After praying at Sr. Faustina's tomb, the painful swelling in Digan's leg disappeared, a healing verified by five doctors upon her return to the United States.

NOV. 22, 1981

Pope John Paul II travels to the Shrine of Merciful Love near Todi, Italy, where he affirms his dedication to proclaiming the message of Divine Mercy: “Right from the beginning of my ministry in St. Peter's See in Rome, I considered this message my special task. Providence has assigned it to me in the present situation of man, the Church and the world. It could be said that precisely this situation assigned that message to me as my task before God.”



DEC. 1992

The Vatican declares Digan's healing a miracle attributed to Sr. Faustina, opening the door to beatification.

APR. 18, 1993

Sr. Faustina is beatified in Rome on the Second Sunday of Easter. In his homily at the beatification Mass, Pope John Paul II asks, "Where, if not in the Divine Mercy, can the world find refuge and the light of hope?"

OCT. 5, 1995

On the Feast of now-Blessed Faustina, Fr. Ron Pytel of Maryland venerates a relic of St. Faustina at the Shrine of the Divine Mercy in Baltimore. Praying for the healing of his congestive heart failure, Fr. Pytel collapses in front of the relic and feels paralyzed for several minutes. His cardiologist soon finds him to be completely healed.

JAN. 2000

The Vatican determines that Fr. Pytel's healing is due to Blessed Faustina's intercession – the second miracle necessary for canonization.

APR. 30, 2000

On Divine Mercy Sunday, St. Faustina is canonized in St. Peter's Square in Rome. Pope John Paul II declares her "the great Apostle of Divine Mercy" and declares the Second Sunday of Easter to be celebrated as Divine Mercy Sunday in the universal Church.

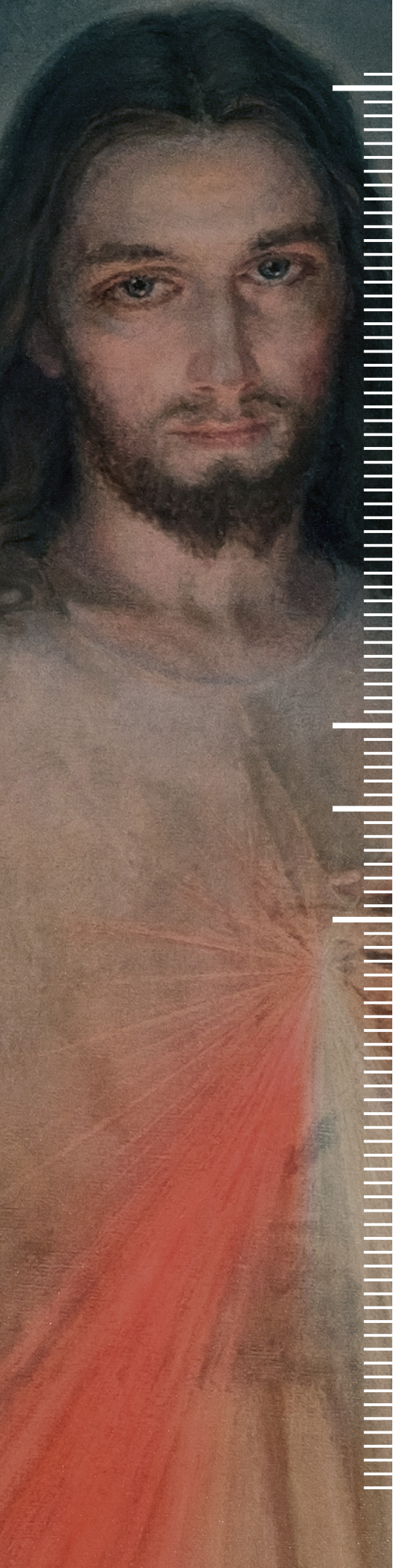


APR. 22, 2001

Divine Mercy Sunday is officially celebrated for the first time by the universal Church.

AUG. 17, 2002

Pope John Paul II dedicates the Shrine of Divine Mercy – the site of St. Faustina's tomb – outside Krakow. He entrusts the world to Divine Mercy "with the burning desire that the message of God's merciful love, proclaimed here through St. Faustina, may be known to all peoples of the earth and fill their hearts with hope."



## JULY 2013

Coming back from World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Pope Francis tells journalists our era is a “kairos of mercy” during which the Church must act as a mother and “find a form of mercy for all.”



## MARCH 13, 2015

In a surprise move, Pope Francis announces the upcoming Holy Year of Mercy.

## APR. 15, 2015

On the Vigil of Divine Mercy Sunday, Pope Francis issues the papal bull *Misericordiae Vultus*, officially proclaiming an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy.

## DEC. 8, 2015

Pope Francis opens the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, marking the beginning of the Holy Year of Mercy on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. The Holy Year will conclude on Nov. 20, 2016, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.