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MERCY AS FRUIT OF THE PASCHAL MYSTERY
IN THE THEOLOGY OF JOHN PAUL II:
THE SOURCE OF CHRISTIAN HOPE

“Death has justice done to it at the price of the death of the one who was without sin...” Christ did die. He died as a human being and therefore he stood in solidarity with man even more firmly than he did before his death. He accepted the contingency which marks a human existence and experienced it in a most painful way. He conquered death not the way a glorious and omnipotent God might do, but, as it were, ‘modestly,’ as one of us, by having accepted the burden that transcended the capacities of a human life.

In His resurrection Christ has revealed the God of merciful love, precisely because He accepted the cross as the way to the resurrection. And it is for this reason that—when we recall the cross of Christ, His passion and death—our faith and hope are centered on the Risen One.

John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*

Man’s great, true hope which holds firm in spite of all disappointments can only be God—God who has loved us and who continues to love us “to the end,” until all “is accomplished.”

Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*

From the beginning of John Paul II’s pontificate, his message to all mankind set the paths of hope and spiritual strengthening. His teaching was an invitation to abandon disbelief and agnosticism and enter into a relationship with God acting in the person of Jesus Christ. The Pope’s first words in St. Peter’s Square, “Be not afraid,” were deeply rooted in his trust and faith, in his personal experience and in his deepest beliefs.¹

One of the major fruits of the pontificate of John Paul II, in particular of the theology he advanced, was the development of the doctrine of the Divine Mercy. The significance of Sister Faustina Kowalska’s revelations regarding

¹ “Because *the Pope* is a witness of Christ and a minister of the Good News, he is a man of joy and a man of hope, *a man of the fundamental affirmation of the value of existence, the value of creation and of hope in the future life.*” John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, ed. Vittorio Messori (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 22.

the spiritual condition of today's world and its people contributed to the fact that preaching the Merciful Father became of prime importance among the tasks the Pope wished to accomplish through his teaching.

The path taken by the Church forty years later shows that the major intuitions and emphases of John Paul II are far from obsolete. On the contrary, the pontificate of Pope Francis focuses on the attitude of mercy conceived as the principal mission of the Church. The current moment in history—the fortieth anniversary of the Polish Pope's first pilgrimage to his homeland, followed with the fortieth anniversary of the promulgation of his first encyclical letter, as well as the upcoming centenary of his birthday and the fifteenth anniversary of the Pope's death—is conducive to a reconstruction of the concept of the Divine Mercy as it is expounded in the teaching of John Paul II.

The central focus of the theology of the Divine Mercy as worked out by John Paul II is undoubtedly the salvific events of the Paschal Mystery. "Redemption involves the revelation of mercy in its fullness. The Paschal Mystery is the culmination of this revealing and effecting of mercy,"² says the Pope, pointing out that the events of the Paschal Mystery are an inexhaustible source of Christian hope. Developing this insight, Benedict XVI—the immediate successor of John Paul II—wrote as follows: "According to the Christian faith, 'redemption'—salvation—is not simply a given. Redemption is offered to us in the sense that we have been given hope, trustworthy hope, by virtue of which we can face our present..."³

John Paul II stressed that the Divine Mercy, which is the fundamental source of hope to the world and which manifested itself above all in the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, reached its climax in the spiritual fruits of the passion, namely, in redemption, justification, and salvation. If it was not for them, it would be impossible to speak of the real significance of the Paschal Mystery. Without the Paschal Mystery, the mercy revealed by Jesus Christ through the words he preached and through his salvific acts would be reduced to universal solidarity and to fidelity to the moral principles laid out in the Good News. Thus, if it was not for the Paschal mystery, the major criterion for discerning the genuineness of the mission of Jesus would be missing. Without the Paschal Mystery, the hope that endures and overcomes the constraints death imposes on human beings would not be possible.

Thus the soteriological dimension of *mysterium paschale* is of critical importance in the theology of the Divine Mercy. Owing to the spiritual fruits of

² J o h n P a u l I I, Encyclical Letter *Dives in Misericordia*, November 30, 1980 (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1980), Section 7.

³ B e n e d i c t X V I, Encyclical Letter *Spe Salvi*, November 30, 2007 (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2007), Section 1.

the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Divine Mercy is the true source of the spiritual life of man. It was through the passion of Christ, followed by his glorious resurrection and ascension, that God made the ultimate salvific gift of himself to man. In the events that contributed to the Paschal Mystery, God showed that the tragic aspects of human life can be overcome.

While considering the Divine Mercy as a source of hope for mankind, we need to focus on its particular dimensions, each of which reveals a whole specific category of its results for man (or fruits of God's mercy), designated by a specific collective name from the glossary of theological terms. In the light of the theology worked out by John Paul II, it is redemption, justification, and salvation that come to the fore as the most profound consequences of God's greatest gift to man.

THE MERCY OF REDEMPTION

Conceived of as a collective category comprising the salvific work done by Jesus Christ, 'redemption' encompasses its particular consequences, among them justification and salvation.⁴ In the strict sense, however, the term 'redemption' denotes 'nullification of sin.' It designates liberation from the slavery of sin, which was accomplished through the expiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ and his 'purchasing' the redeemed for God. "The redemptive power of suffering is in love."⁵ Everything that follows—justification, entering into the New Covenant, the gift of new life and new dignity—is only successive consequences of the fundamental grace granted to the humanity through the sacrifice of Jesus and his 'gift' of the cross, which was tantamount to liberating man from the slavery of sin. All these consequences of the sacrifice of Christ are a source of a new hope for humanity. "Could not one find here the answer which humanity awaits today? It can be received only from Christ crucified, the holy one who suffers. He can penetrate the heart of the most painful human problems, because he already stands beside all who suffer and who ask him for an awakening of new hope."⁶

In the succeeding part of the article, three aspects and meanings of the issue of redemption will be analyzed, the main focus being its sense of victory over

⁴ See John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis*, March 4, 1979 (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1979), Sections 7, 8, and 9.

⁵ John Paul II, "The Meaning of Suffering in the Light of Christ's Passion" (General Audience, Vatican, Wednesday, November 9, 1988), Section 2, <http://www.totus2us.com/teaching/jpii-catechesis-on-jesus-christ/the-meaning-of-suffering-in-the-light-of-christs-passion>.

⁶ Ibidem, Section 8.

sin and death, as well as reconciliation with the Father, or reestablishment of the bond destroyed by sin.

MERCY IS LOVE WHICH CONQUERS SIN

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that the obedience of Jesus to his Father, manifested in his acceptance of the work of redemption, was his response to the Father's redemptive love for his people. Thus the formulation we find in the *Catechism*... prompts the conclusion that it was God the Father who initiated the work of redemption and that God's design took the shape of redemptive love.⁷ This "merciful love"⁸—as John Paul II described it—is revealed by the Son of God. "Indeed this Redemption is the ultimate and definitive revelation of the holiness of God, who is the absolute fullness of perfection: fullness of justice and of love, since justice is based on love, flows from it and tends towards it,"⁹ we read in *Dives in Misericordia*. A deeper insight into the holiness of God will enable a discovery of the fundamental implication of redemption.

According to *Dives in Misericordia*, the holiness of God is manifested in that man can 'partake' of God. It is manifested in God's being 'for' man. A grave obstruction, however, in man's relationship with God is sin. Therefore, redemption above all shows man the essence and nature of sin. The encyclical on the Divine Mercy defines sin negatively, namely, by describing what sin is not, as well as points to ways to overcome it. Among other things, we read that sin undermines the "creative power in man."¹⁰ Redemption restores this power and retrieves man's access to the fullness of life, making the holiness that comes from God again available to man. In the entire history of salvation, it is sin that has been the root of all evil and the cause of death.¹¹ Sin manifests man's rejection of God's fatherly love and denotes a breach of God's covenant with man.¹² It is due to sin that God's love cannot be revealed in any way other than mercy which removes all imperfection and misery.¹³

⁷ See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2003, Sections 604–609 (https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM)).

⁸ J o h n P a u l II, *Dives in Misericordia*, Section 3.

⁹ Ibidem, Section 7.

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ Ibidem, Section 8.

¹² See J o h n P a u l II, *Redemptor Hominis*, Section 9.

¹³ See Antoni S ł o m k o w s k i, "Miłosierdzie Boże w paschalnym misterium," in *"Bo na wieki Jego miłosierdzie" (Ps 135): Ks. Michał Sopoćko o miłosierdziu Bożym*, ed. Tomasz Bielski, vol. 2, *Powołanie człowieka* (Poznań and Warszawa: Pallottinum, 1972), 167. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

Mercy in itself, as a perfection of the infinite God, is also infinite. Also infinite therefore and inexhaustible is the Father's readiness to receive the prodigal children who return to His home. Infinite are the readiness and power of forgiveness which flow continually from the marvelous value of the sacrifice of the Son. No human sin can prevail over this power or even limit it. On the part of man only a lack of good will can limit it, a lack of readiness to be converted and to repent, in other words persistence in obstinacy, opposing grace and truth, especially in the face of the witness of the cross and resurrection of Christ.¹⁴

Thus John Paul II emphasizes that the sacrifice of Christ was so powerful that no sin can ever prevail over it. On the other hand, it by no means violated the freedom of man. Sin is ultimately *felix culpa*, 'happy fault': the fault which has been obliterated by the 'glorious Redeemer.'

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, himself without sin and partaking of the Divine fullness of perfection and love, took upon himself the sins of man. The Pope explains: "If he 'made to be sin' him who was without any sin whatever, it was to reveal the love that is always greater than the whole of creation, the love that is he himself, since 'God is love.'"¹⁵ God's love exposes the nullity of sin, simultaneously demonstrating that sin is incompatible with the intended nature of all creation. God's mercy, which obliterates sin and evil, reveals goodness as the mark of the original nature of the creation.

In consequence of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ man receives forgiveness of his sins: the body of his sins is destroyed. "Overcoming evil: this is the meaning of the Redemption"¹⁶. However, the redemptive effect of the Paschal Mystery is broader than destruction of sin: evil, which is lack of love, is compensated by the 'surplus' of God's love.

MERCY IS VICTORY OVER DEATH

Christ's victory over death is directly related to his victory over sin. The theological conception of sin as the cause of death which the encyclical elaborates corresponds to the description of the nature of sin we can find in the

¹⁴ J o h n P a u l I I, *Dives in Misericordia*, Section 13. For a definition of sin stating what sin is, see J o h n P a u l I I, Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, December 2, 1984 (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1984), Section 14. The Pope writes that sin is primarily an exclusion of God, rupture with God, and disobedience to God. See *ibidem*.

¹⁵ J o h n P a u l I I, *Redemptor Hominis*, Section 9.

¹⁶ J o h n P a u l I I, Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, November 10, 1994 (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994), Section 7. See also Janusz L e k a n, "Przebaczenie w optyce miłosierdzia," *Teologia w Polsce* 10, no. 2 (2016): 64–77.

Catechism of the Catholic Church.¹⁷ In doing justice to sin, Christ—through his death—did justice also to death.¹⁸ Himself without sin and not subjected to death, Christ embraced the burden of guilt and contingency of human existence. “Because of his innocence and holiness ... he could take upon himself that which is the effect of sin, namely, suffering and death, giving to the sacrifice of his life a real value and a perfect redemptive meaning.”¹⁹ This paradox proved to be pregnant with consequences of spiritual significance. The efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ with respect to victory over death can be fully seen in his glorious resurrection. In the act of raising Jesus, God’s inclination toward his creation manifested itself as mercy liberating the creation from the constraints imposed by death. As John Paul II emphasized, the resurrection of Jesus Christ revealed merciful love in that it followed the sacrifice of the cross.²⁰

The soteriological perspective of Christ’s victory over death is an issue of particular theological significance. The context of the entire teaching on the salvific fruits of the Paschal Mystery shows that its meaning is by no means exhausted in the abolishment of death. “Death has justice done to it at the price of the death of the one who was without sin...”²¹ Christ did die. He died as a human being and therefore he stood in solidarity with man even more firmly than he did before his death. He accepted the contingency which marks a human existence and experienced it in a most painful way.²² He conquered death not the way a glorious and omnipotent God might do, but, as it were, ‘modestly,’ as one of us, by having accepted the burden that transcended the capacities of a human life.²³ His victory, confirmed by his rising, demonstrated that death was no longer the ultimate end of a human life. The rising of Jesus, the manifestation of God’s mercy experienced by his only begotten Son, gave death a new and true meaning and showed that its nature is transitional and that it by no means marks the end of life.

Thanks to the sacrifice of Christ, death is no longer the final goal, or the destiny, of the creation.²⁴ Death turned out to be merely a transition, an actual

¹⁷ See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Section 602.

¹⁸ See J o h n P a u l II, *Dives in Misericordia*, Section 8.

¹⁹ J o h n P a u l II, “The Redemptive Value of Christ’s Sacrifice” (General Audience, Vatican, Wednesday, October 26, 1988), Section 3, <http://www.totus2us.com/teaching/jpii-catechesis-on-jesus-christ/the-redemptive-value-of-christs-sacrifice/>.

²⁰ See J o h n P a u l II, *Dives in Misericordia*, Section 8.

²¹ Ibidem.

²² See Zofia J. Z d y b i c k a, “Konanie i śmierć Chrystusa radykalnym objawieniem miłosierdzia,” in Jan Paweł II. *“Dives in misericordia”*: Tekst i komentarze, ed. Stanisław Nagy (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1983), 141–51.

²³ See ibidem, 148.

²⁴ See J o h n P a u l II, *Dives in Misericordia*, Section 8. See also J o h n P a u l II, “The Redemptive Value of Christ’s Sacrifice,” Section 3; Kazimierz H o ł a, “Teologiczno-dogmatyczne

Passover.²⁵ Christ's sacrifice became the highest revelation of the Divine Mercy, since it rid man of the most dreadful prospect, namely, that of annihilation. As a result, after the spearhead of the blade of death was broken, it became a gateway to the new life forecasting the second birth and the encounter with the Father. "With his death Jesus reveals that at the end of life man is not doomed to immersion in obscurity, in the existential void, in the abyss of nothingness. But man is invited to meet the Father toward whom he moved in the journey of faith and love during life, and into whose arms he threw himself with holy abandonment at the hour of death."²⁶

The Divine Mercy revealed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is also a sign pointing to the existence of a transcendent reality to which the phenomenon of death does not apply. In the eschatological state in which 'the first things are gone,' mankind is to achieve the intended reconciliation with God. "The new life granted to believers by virtue of Christ's resurrection consists in victory over the death caused by sin, and a sharing in the divine life of grace.... The definitive victory over death, already won by Christ, is shared by him with humanity in the measure in which it receives the fruits of redemption. It is a process of admission to the new life, to the eternal life which will last until the end of time."²⁷

MERCY IS RECONCILIATION WITH THE FATHER

Conceived as a fruit of redemption, man's reconciliation with God is the theme of the apostolic exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*. The Divine Mercy is described here in terms of God's initiative to reconcile with man.²⁸ To illustrate his teaching, John Paul II made use of the parable of the prodigal son, which explains the nature of reconciliation.²⁹

aspekty encykliki 'Dives in misericordia,'" in *Encyklika Ojca Świętego Jana Pawła II O Bożym Miłosierdziu "Dives in misericordia": Tekst i komentarz*, ed. Stanisław Grzybek and Marian Jaworski (Kraków: Polskie Towarzystwo Teologiczne w Krakowie, 1981), 146–7.

²⁵ See J o h n P a u l II, "Christ's Last Words on the Cross" (General Audience, Vatican, Wednesday, Dec. 7, 1988), Section 5, <http://www.totus2us.com/teaching/jpii-catechesis-on-jesus-christ/christs-last-words-on-the-cross/>.

²⁶ Ibidem, Section 6.

²⁷ J o h n P a u l II, "The Saving Power of the Resurrection" (General Audience, Vatican, Wednesday, 15 March 1989), Sections 2–4, <http://www.totus2us.com/teaching/jpii-catechesis-on-jesus-christ/the-saving-power-of-the-resurrection/>.

²⁸ See, e.g., J o h n P a u l II, *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, Sections 10 and 20.

²⁹ See ibidem, Section 6.

The Pope notes that the initiative of reconciliation always comes from God and is a manifestation of his merciful love.³⁰ “This initiative on God’s part is made concrete and manifest in the redemptive act of Christ,”³¹ says the Pope. The form of this reconciliation, which assumed the shape of a shocking sacrifice motivated by love, transcends human cognitive capacities. If it was not for *mysterium pietatis* revealed through Christ, sin would claim victory in the history of mankind, bringing destruction and rendering the implementation of God’s redemptive plan impossible. *Mysterium pietatis* embraces the mystery of God’s infinite mercy, which can heal human iniquity at its core.³² John Paul II clearly states: “The mystery of pietas, on God’s part, is that mercy in which our Lord and Father—I repeat it again—is infinitely rich.... We exclaim in gratitude: ‘Yes, the Lord is rich in mercy’ and even: ‘The Lord is mercy.’ The mystery of pietas is the path opened by divine mercy to a reconciled life.”³³ However, the reconciliation earned through the sacrifice of Christ is characterized by an objective aspect. A subjective, personal reconciliation with God calls for a cooperation from the side of man, in particular for his acceptance of the gift of God’s forgiveness.³⁴

The fundamental condition of man’s reconciliation with God—but also with other human beings and with the entire creation³⁵—is liberation from sin. It is sin that causes rupture within a human being, or introduces a lack of harmony in it, and, last but not least, results in man’s separation from God. Reconciliation with God is the step that follows remission of sins and forgiveness, and yet its root is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Since the beginning of Christianity, the death of Christ has been perceived as the source of unity for “the dispersed children of God” (Jn 11:52). John Paul II repeats after St. Paul that in Christ the Father himself reconciled with him all creatures.³⁶ Any reconciliation with others, or healing of broken relationships, always comes after reconciliation with God. The ‘vertical’ reconciliation has a priority over a ‘horizontal’ one.

³⁰ “Having thus established him [Jesus] in solidarity with us sinners, God ‘did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all’ (Rom 8:32), so that we might be ‘reconciled to God by the death of his Son’ (Rom 5:10).” *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Section 603.

³¹ J o h n P a u l I I, *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, Section 10. See also J o h n P a u l I I, “Offer Forgiveness and Receive Peace.” Message for the Celebration of the 30th World Day of Peace (Vatican, December 8, 1996), Section 6, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_08121996_xxx-world-day-for-peace.html.

³² See J o h n P a u l I I, *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, Sections 19 and 20.

³³ Ibidem, Section 22.

³⁴ See ibidem, Section 13.

³⁵ See ibidem, Section 8.

³⁶ See Alfons N o s s o l, “Chrystologia encykliki ‘Redemptor hominis,’” in *Jan Paweł II, “Redemptor hominis”: Tekst i komentarz* (Kraków: Polskie Towarzystwo Teologiczne w Krakowie, 1980), 94–103.

THE MERCY OF JUSTIFICATION

Man's condition resulting from sin—the state of being separated from God, who is the Source and Giver of all temporal and eternal life—goes against the plan of the Creator. According to a popular Christian insight, sin has not only 'flawed' the creation, but has also harmed the One who embodies the highest holiness and justice. Aware of their faults, human beings believed that reestablishment of the original condition of grace intended by God for all creation, as well as gaining salvation, was possible only by way of atonement which was to satisfy the wronged and humiliated God and his justice. In history, thinking along those lines was reflected in sacrificial cults.

However, God conceived a fully efficient way to re-establish the distorted justice. As the Guardian of order, he resolved the impasse caused by the apparent conflict between love and justice. God revealed the meaning of perfect justice, which is closer to holiness and love rather than to justice conceived in purely human terms, and proved that he can restore justice without inflicting revenge or punishment on creation. The way God used was justification. He gave his own Son so that the greatest injustice possible, that of deicide, might be transformed in him and by him.

MERCY VERSUS JUSTICE

While analyzing the issue of the simultaneous interdependence and distinctiveness of God's attributes, it stands to reason to evoke a valid view that in God there is no difference between his nature and his attributes. Reference to his attributes is a way of describing the perfection that exists in God.³⁷

'Mercy' and 'justice,' in particular when understood in human terms, might seem contradictory notions, yet this contradiction is merely apparent. Mercy is usually defined as compassion shown to someone in an active way. Justice, on the other hand, is generally understood in the sense of social or distributive justice, that is granting someone something they are rightfully entitled to due to their merit or work done. In order to grasp the nature of the Divine Mercy, the author of the encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* refers—in the above quoted extracts—to biblical definitions that embrace human, but already theological apparatus of notions. According to the terminology used in the Bible, mercy shown to man by God, in particular the Divine Mercy expressed in the Paschal

³⁷ See Wincenty Granat, *Teodycea* (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1968), 381–4. See also Wincenty Granat, "Miłosierdzie jako przymiot Boga," in *Ewangelia miłosierdzia*, ed. Wincenty Granat (Poznań and Warszawa: Pallottinum, 1970), 9–49.

Mystery, comprises the fullness of Divinity, but simultaneously the fullness of justice, perfection and holiness.

Justice done by God to sinful creation addresses sin itself; it is sin that justice is done to. As a result of God's intervention, man is not harmed. He is saved. What is more, his creative love is restored.³⁸ God's justice, the only and full one, is superabundant, since it compensates for human sins. This justice "springs completely from love: from the love of the Father and of the Son, and completely bears fruit in love."³⁹ For God, restoration of justice disrupted by sin means restoration of the salvific order. Punishment for the creation is out of question. The death of the Son of God shows that God's justice does not call for propitiation; rather, it is ready to give itself away in order to save the creation.

Thus, according to the theology advanced by John Paul II, the notions of justice and mercy are not contradictory.⁴⁰ The nature of the justice of God, which is an attribute of his, is tantamount to mercy, which transcends all human understanding⁴¹ and was clearly manifested by the act of the cross and by the resurrection of Jesus. The Divine Mercy is, in its essence, the justice shown by infinitely good God the Father, who 'compensated' for human sins with the sacrifice of his Son.⁴² Therefore, we may say that God's will embraces both mercy and justice, as well as salvation.

The order of the relation obtaining between mercy and justice has been described by John Paul II in the following way: "Demonstrating from the very start what the 'human heart' is capable of ('to be merciful'), do not these words from the Sermon on the Mount reveal in the same perspective the deep mystery of God: that inscrutable unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in which love, containing justice, sets in motion mercy, which in its turn reveals the perfection of justice?"⁴³

³⁸ See John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*, Section 7.

³⁹ Ibidem.

⁴⁰ This teaching has been repeated by Pope Francis. See Francis, *Misericordiae vultus*: Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, Vatican, April 11, 2015 (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), Sections 20 and 21. See also Józef W a r z e s z a k, "Papież Franciszek świadkiem Bożego miłosierdzia," *Warszawskie Studia Teologiczne* 29, no. 4 (2016): 45–6.

⁴¹ See Agnieszka D u d e k, "Reinterpretacja relacji miłosierdzie–sprawiedliwość w posoborowych dokumentach Kościoła," Master and Licentiate Thesis presented to the Chair of Christology at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin in 2001 (unpublished).

⁴² See Anastazy B ł a w a t, "Kontemplacja miłosierdzia Bożego w Mysterium Paschale," *Communio* 1, nos. 1–2 (1981): 98; Stanisław N a g y, "Wynagrodzenie w tajemnicy Bożego miłosierdzia," in Jan Paweł II. *"Dives in misericordia": Tekst i komentarze*, 160.

⁴³ John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*, Section 8. See Roman K a r w a c k i, "Soteriologia," in *Dogmatyka w perspektywie Bożego miłosierdzia*, ed. Krzysztof Gózdź and Krzysztof Guzowski (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2010), 122–3.

THE ESSENCE OF JUSTIFICATION

In theology, justification is understood as the act in which God, through his act of love, guides man towards the relationship with him, which he, the Holy God, requires of man and which he, the Merciful God, is ready to offer to him. God puts his plan into practice by making man partake of his Divine nature, which happens once the Holy Spirit divinizes man, having dwelled in his being.⁴⁴

In his definition of justification, John Paul II emphasized that God offered man his own justice in the mystery of the cross of Jesus Christ.⁴⁵ The encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* teaches that justification is the deepest core of redemption.⁴⁶ In the encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*, in turn, John Paul II writes about “mercy, which is able to justify man, to restore justice in the sense of that salvific order which God willed from the beginning in man and, through man, in the world.”⁴⁷ The act of justification consists in that the abundance of justice in God makes him ready to sacrifice himself in the person of his Son and thus nullify the ‘difference’ in the measure of justice used by himself and by the creation respectively. Thus the abyss of sin gets ‘filled up.’ By justifying mankind, God does justice to his own justice, annihilating humiliation he endured from sinful mankind.⁴⁸

The source of justification accomplished in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ is God’s love and the Divine Mercy. It is Divine Love that urges God to reach out to man with the initiative of justification: “His is a love that does not draw back before anything that justice requires in him.”⁴⁹

Mercy “reveals the perfection of justice”⁵⁰: it shows that justice is not self-sufficient, stagnant, or self-oriented. On the contrary, in God, man can partake

⁴⁴ See Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, *Theological Dictionary*, transl. by Richard Strachan (New York: Herder & Herder, 1965). See also Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, “Usprawiedliwienie” [Justification], in *Mały słownik teologiczny*, trans. Tadeusz Mieszkowski and Paweł Pachciarek (Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1996), col. 611–2.

⁴⁵ See John Paul II, “The Moral Law Is Identified with the Will of God” (General Audience, Vatican, Wednesday, December 18, 1985), Section 4, <http://www.totus2us.com/teaching/jpii-catechesis-on-god-father-creator/the-moral-law-is-identified-with-the-will-of-god/>.

⁴⁶ See John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, Section 9.

⁴⁷ John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*, Section 7.

⁴⁸ See Błażewski, “Kontemplacja miłosierdzia Bożego w Mysterium Paschale,” 98. See also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Section 602; Wacław Hryniewicz, “W głąb tajemnicy odkupienia: Doniosłość soteriologicznej nauki Jana Pawła II,” in Jan Paweł II. “*Redemptor hominis*”: *Teksty i komentarze*, ed. Zofia J. Zdybicka (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1982), 179; Bogdan Fedek, “Miłosierdzie Boże jako źródło usprawiedliwienia grzesznika,” *Perspectiva: Legnickie Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne* 2, no. 1 (2003): 184–96.

⁴⁹ John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, Section 9.

⁵⁰ John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*, Section 8.

of justice: he can learn justification and learn that it is being active that is the nature of justice. If we can say that God justifies man, the meaning is that God makes man righteous—and thus God's friend.⁵¹

SATISFACTION OF THE LOVE OF THE FATHER

The notion of satisfaction, or rather doing justice, was used by John Paul II in his encyclicals *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia*.⁵² Although the concepts in questions might be related to a demand of sacrifice from the sinner, they should be interpreted in the same context as those concerning the sacrificial death of Christ, which was the gift of God to man. With his death, Jesus Christ did justice to God's love and faithfulness to man. Jesus became the reconciliation of humanity with the Father. The death of Jesus on the cross did justice to God in the sense that it once again opened God's fatherhood up to man so that God could approach mankind.⁵³

The concept of satisfaction was to a certain extent reinterpreted in the context of the Trinitarian and personalistic theology developed by John Paul II. The concept in question is no longer understood narrowly, as justice in its distributive, stagnant and subjective sense; rather, its interpretation refers to love, mercy and God's faithfulness to himself. If justice revealed on the cross is adequate to God and, as such, born out of love and bearing fruit in love, it does not require compensation in the sense of punishment offered through the blood of the Son. The mystery of the cross comprised "the overwhelming encounter of divine transcendent justice with love: that 'kiss' given by mercy to justice."⁵⁴

Satisfaction is seen in the quoted encyclicals as an opportunity to reveal God's fatherhood towards creation. Satisfaction has nothing to do with atonement, propitiation or compensation in the sense of retributive justice. Justice has already been done ultimately to sin and death. John Paul II emphasizes: "The cross of Christ, on which the Son, consubstantial with the Father, renders full justice to God, is also a radical revelation of mercy, or rather of the love that goes against what constitutes the very root of evil in the history of man: against sin and death."⁵⁵

⁵¹ See Bogdan Sikorski, "Odkupienie jako nowe stworzenie," in Jan Paweł II. "*Redemptor hominis*": Tekst i komentarz, 112.

⁵² See ibidem. See also John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*, Section 7.

⁵³ See John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, Section 9. See also Hryniewicz, "W głąb tajemnicy odkupienia: Doniosłość soteriologicznej nauki Jana Pawła II," 179.

⁵⁴ John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*, Section 9.

⁵⁵ John Paul II, ibidem, Section 8. See also Hryniewicz, "W głąb tajemnicy odkupienia: Doniosłość soteriologicznej nauki Jana Pawła II," 179.

In John Paul II's catecheses, one can find certain references to the traditional terminology that defines the sacrifice of Christ as the price and compensation for the liberation of man from the slavery of sin. However, the Pope does not say that Jesus offered his sacrifice to God the Father; on the contrary, John Paul II points out that Christ completed his salvific mission on the cross out of love. The Pope emphasizes "the sacrifice of the Man-God"⁵⁶ and writes that Christ "satisfied the Father's eternal love".⁵⁷ It is not said, however, to whom "the sacrifice" was made. The phrases in question refer to sin since Jesus Christ made his sacrifice for all the human beings and on their behalf. His passion expressed "the superabundance of love which overcomes every deficiency and insufficiency of human love, every negation and contrariety linked with human sin in every dimension—interior and historical—in which this sin has weighed on the relationship of man with God."⁵⁸ Moreover, it would be wrong to assume that Christ was to offer his atoning sacrifice to the Father, since Christ was sent by the Father for the sake of the salvation of the world so that the world would be liberated from the slavery of sin. John Paul II points out that the Father and the Son always act 'in unison.'⁵⁹

THE MERCY OF SALVATION

In the theological sense, the salvation accomplished by God is most frequently defined as the liberation of man from the slavery of sin which might entail eternal damnation, and as offering man a share in the eternal happiness of God. Salvation denotes, on the one hand, the transformation of the entire mankind into the Kingdom of God (*basileia*) and, on the other, the gift God gave mankind in Jesus Christ by making every human being capable of partaking of his nature. As such, salvation is the contents of Divine promise and the object of human hope.⁶⁰

According to the teaching of John Paul II, salvation—in all the abundance of its meaning—is the greatest gift of the Divine Mercy.⁶¹ While the gift of salvation is rooted in the Paschal Mystery,⁶² it will be revealed fully only in the life to come. Inspired by the Holy Spirit and by the power of her faith, the

⁵⁶ J o h n P a u l I I, *Dives in Misericordia*, Section 7.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, Section 9.

⁵⁸ J o h n P a u l I I, "The Redemptive Value of Christ's Sacrifice," Section 4. See also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Sections 609 and 615.

⁵⁹ See J o h n P a u l I I, "Jesus Christ, the Son Sent by the Father" (General Audience, Vatican, Wednesday, June 24, 1987), Section 8, <http://www.totus2us.com/teaching/jpii-catechesis-on-jesus-christ/jesus-christ-the-son-sent-by-the-father>.

⁶⁰ See "Zbawienie" [Salvation], in *Mały słownik teologiczny*, col. 665.

⁶¹ See Marek P y c, "Chrystologia," in *Dogmatyka w perspektywie Bożego miłosierdzia*, 103–16.

⁶² See J o h n P a u l I I, *Dives in Misericordia*, Section 8.

Church can nevertheless discern the meaning of the salvation offered by God, and in particular the meaning of God's gift of the new life, which she wishes to enter already in her earthly existence.

THE COVENANT WITH THE WHOLE OF MANKIND

The Paschal Mystery of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ began a new covenant between God and mankind.⁶³ The New Covenant—a new and eternal one—was made in the blood of Christ and completed by the Pentecost after his ascension.⁶⁴ “By virtue of this sacrifice, the ‘new Counselor’ (*Parakletos*) (cf. Jn 14:16), the Holy Spirit, is given to those who are ‘sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints’ (1 Cor 1:2).”⁶⁵

The covenant God made with mankind in Christ is eternal and it goes back to earlier stages of history, when it was announced.⁶⁶ The all-encompassing covenant, which does not exclude anyone, be it a group of people or a nation, is symbolized, in parables told by Jesus, by the concept of ‘feast.’ This New Covenant is a work of the Divine Mercy, in which God confirms, in love, his eternal faithfulness to man.⁶⁷ God's invitation to the covenant is universal and whether a person will partake of it is contingent solely on her response.⁶⁸ “Through the covenant, especially that full and definitive covenant in Jesus Christ, God becomes in a certain way immanent in regard to the world. Yet he completely preserves his own transcendence. The incarnate God, and still more the crucified God, remains an incomprehensible and ineffable God. But

⁶³ See 1 Cor 11:25. See also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Section 613.

⁶⁴ See J o h n P a u l I I, “Pentecost is the Fulfillment of the New Covenant” (General Audience, Vatican, Wednesday, August 2, 1989), Section 1, <http://www.totus2us.com/teaching/jpii-catechesis-on-god-the-holy-spirit/pentecost-is-the-fulfillment-of-the-new-covenant/>; J o h n P a u l I I, “People of God, a Holy People” (General Audience, Wednesday, Vatican, August 16, 1989), Section 1, <http://www.totus2us.com/teaching/jpii-catechesis-on-god-the-holy-spirit/pentecost-people-of-god-a-holy-people/>; J o h n P a u l I I “Pentecost: The Birth of the Church” (General Audience, Vatican, Wednesday, August 30, 1989), Section 1, <http://www.totus2us.com/teaching/jpii-catechesis-on-god-the-holy-spirit/the-birth-of-the-church/>.

⁶⁵ J o h n P a u l I I, “People of God, a Holy People,” Section 5.

⁶⁶ See J o h n P a u l I I, “The God of the Covenant” (General Audience, Vatican, Wednesday, September 25, 1985), Sections 2–4, <http://www.totus2us.com/teaching/jpii-catechesis-on-god-father-creator/the-god-of-the-covenant>.

⁶⁷ See B ł a w a t, “Kontemplacja miłosierdzia Bożego w Mysterium Paschale,” 101.

⁶⁸ See J o h n P a u l I I, “The Church is Revealed in Parables” (General Audience, Vatican, Wednesday, September 18, 1991), Section 4, <http://www.totus2us.com/vocation/jpii-catechesis-on-the-church/the-church-is-revealed-in-parables>.

he becomes for us still more incomprehensible and ineffable precisely in so far as he is manifested as a God of an infinite, inscrutable love.”⁶⁹

In the Passover of the New Covenant—in the passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ—the world is once again given to God.⁷⁰ Owing to the New Covenant, the eternal plan God had in store for his creation can be implemented. It marks the transition of creation from the state it was in after breaking the initial covenant with God to the new one, which was made in the eschatological perspective.⁷¹ In the eschatological fulfillment, in the world devoid of imperfection, where there will be no pain or tears, the Divine Mercy will be ultimately revealed as love.⁷²

THE GIFT OF THE NEW CREATION

The focus of *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia*, despite their dogmatic significance, is theological anthropology. Indeed, John Paul II believed that the issues regarded as the deposit of faith have a potential of inspiring a spiritual and moral revitalization of humanity.

While the encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* brings an in-depth analysis of the reality of the late 1970s, one cannot help the observation that the problems the encyclical addresses are pressing issues even today. Among them are alienation and man's fear of what he produces with his hands and with his intellect, uncontrollable consumerism, and threats to human freedom.⁷³ *Dives in Misericordia* repeats these diagnoses and adds to them remarks on the uneasiness caused in the contemporary world by the rising globalization, increased arms race, and violation of the human rights.⁷⁴

John Paul II repeatedly emphasizes that the mystery of redemption, in which man finds a confirmation of his greatness and dignity, is an inexhaustible source of renewal both in the individual and in the global sense. It was in the Paschal events that the salvific order willed by God from the beginning was restored.⁷⁵ In the Paschal Mystery, man is once again ‘expressed,’ revealed to

⁶⁹ John Paul II, “The God of the Covenant,” Section 7.

⁷⁰ See The Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, November 21, 1964, Section 3, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

⁷¹ See John Paul II, “The Church in the Old Testament” (General Audience, Vatican, Wednesday, August 7, 1991), Section 5, <http://www.totus2us.com/vocation/jpii-catechesis-on-the-church/the-church-in-the-old-testament/>.

⁷² John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*, Section 8.

⁷³ See *ibidem*, Sections 8, 15, and 16.

⁷⁴ See John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*, Section 11.

⁷⁵ See *ibidem*, Section 7.

himself, and, in a way, newly created.⁷⁶ This ‘new creation’ is described in the opening part of *Redemptor Hominis*.

This act of redemption [the Incarnation] marked the high point of the history of man within God’s loving plan. God entered the history of humanity and, as a man, became an actor in that history, one of the thousands of millions of human beings but at the same time Unique! Through the Incarnation God gave human life the dimension that he intended man to have from his first beginning; he has granted that dimension definitively—in the way that is peculiar to him alone, in keeping with his eternal love and mercy.”⁷⁷

By being united with each man, Christ restored God’s image and likeness in him. “From the mystery is born ‘the new man,’ called to become a partaker of God’s life, and newly created in Christ for the fullness of grace and truth.”⁷⁸

The ‘new creation’ of man was possible thanks to Christ the Redeemer, who restored the initial relationship of the humankind with God.⁷⁹ The God of redemption is at the same time the God of creation. By saving the world, he, as it were, newly creates it.⁸⁰

In the individual dimension, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ should be understood in the sense of making a sinner partake of the perfection of God, which is accomplished in a transformation the human heart undergoes once it is immersed in the fruits of the Paschal Mystery.⁸¹ In *Dives in Misericordia* John Paul II writes that the ‘new’ creation is manifested already in the restoration of love as the creative power in man,⁸² which inspires him to live in a relationship with God and to partake of God’s life.⁸³

Through the mystery of redemption, as a result of salvation, man’s Divine filiation is restored. The mystery of the cross reveals God’s eternal plan to adopt man and make him the heir to the kingdom. Because of sin, man had rejected God’s plan and his privilege was revoked. However, the New Covenant between God and mankind—the new ‘spiritual adoption’—nullified the previous condition of the humankind. God’s adoption of man, which restored man’s dignity, has shown

⁷⁶ See J o h n P a u l II, *Redemptor Hominis*, Section 10.

⁷⁷ Ibidem, Section 1.

⁷⁸ Ibidem, section 18. See also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Section 654, and L e k a n, “Przebaczenie w optyce miłosierdzia”: 64–5.

⁷⁹ See J o h n P a u l II, *Redemptor Hominis*, Section 9.

⁸⁰ See S i k o r s k i, “Odkupienie jako nowe stworzenie,” 103–18. See also Stanisław W ł o d a r c z y k, “Odkupiciel człowieka Jezus Chrystus jest ośrodkiem wszechświata i historii,” in Jan Paweł II. “*Redemptor hominis*”: *Tekst i komentarz*, 119–22.

⁸¹ See B ł a w a t, “Kontemplacja miłosierdzia Bożego w Misterium Paschale”: 98.

⁸² See J o h n P a u l II, *Dives in Misericordia*, Section 7.

⁸³ See ibidem. See also B ł a w a t, “Kontemplacja miłosierdzia Bożego w Misterium Paschale”: 98.

that the relationship obtaining between God and man is that of merciful fatherhood. God does not reject creation, but seeks to regain it. "Believing in the crucified Son means 'seeing the Father,' means believing that love is present in the world and that this love is more powerful than any kind of evil in which individuals, humanity, or the world are involved."⁸⁴ The gift of a new life and a new dignity of the humankind, which follows the Paschal Mystery, is manifested also in that, having experienced mercy, man is simultaneously called to show mercy towards God.⁸⁵

The salvific gift of a new life is fully revealed by Paschal Christ. The day of the resurrection of Jesus may be compared to the seventh day of creation, on which God rested after his work. The act of creation was undoubtedly a work of mercy and the act of raising Jesus had the same nature.⁸⁶ Risen Christ is also a sign of the glorious condition to which creation is advancing.⁸⁷ Christ is the New Adam, the 'heavenly man,' perfect in body and spirit, free from death and the limitations of physicality, and called to the eternal life in God and with God.⁸⁸ It was the resurrection of Christ that revealed the reality eternally shared by the Son of Man. In the transformed and glorified humanity, this mystery has become available to human cognition.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF "A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH" (Rev 21:1)

To the people of the New Covenant, the salvific reality initiated in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ has a symbolic significance and is a sign of hope rather than an object of actual experience.⁸⁹

The cross and the empty tomb of Jesus are the fundamental signs of the the Paschal Mystery. Both are eschatological symbols which anticipate the ultimate fulfilment and renewal of the world in love that will win its victory conquering the deepest sources of evil.⁹⁰ Thus the full revelation of the Divine Mercy already present in the fruits of the Paschal Mystery will only be accomplished at the end of time, in "the Kingdom of life and holiness."⁹¹ The fulfilment and revelation of

⁸⁴ J o h n P a u l I I, *Dives in Misericordia*, Section 7.

⁸⁵ Ibidem, Section 8.

⁸⁶ See B ł a w a t, "Kontemplacja miłosierdzia Bożego w Mysterium Paschale": 108.

⁸⁷ See 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; 1 Cor 15:23; Col 1:18.

⁸⁸ See S i k o r s k i, "Odkupienie jako nowe stworzenie," 112–3.

⁸⁹ See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Section 670.

⁹⁰ See J o h n P a u l I I, *Dives in Misericordia*, Section 8.

⁹¹ Ibidem. See J o h n P a u l I I, "The Church Witnesses to Gospel Hope" (General Audience, Vatican, Wednesday, May 27, 1992), Section 4, <http://www.totus2us.com/vocation/jpii-catechesis-on-the-church/the-church-witnesses-to-gospel-hope>. See also J o h n P a u l I I, "Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All the Creation." Message for the celebration of the World Day of Peace, Vatican, December 8,

the Divine Mercy have their foundation already in the salvific events: in the ‘hour’ of Christ. However, the full meaning of that ‘hour’ still remains covered.

In *Dives in Misericordia*, John Paul II elaborates on the teaching that the resurrection of Christ is the ultimate sign of the revelation of merciful love in the world: it is the sign that anticipates the reality in which creation will be saved from death, all shortcomings will be compensated, and mercy will no longer function in the context of the misery of sin, but will be fulfilled in guiding creation to the state of perfection based on the principle of love.

The Divine Mercy, which reveals the reality of salvation to the people of the New Covenant as the ultimate goal and hope, is simultaneously a program that calls for daily implementation. Thus the ultimate revelation of the Divine Mercy brings the duty to accept this program as the rule of life and carry it out based on the gifts of the Spirit, in particular by practicing mercy, in line with the conviction that the reality of salvation is revealed most of all in the hearts of people united with God.⁹²

The gift of salvation is revealed also by the birth of hope for a new earth and a new heaven in human hearts: the hope for a reality where creation will experience its ultimate fulfilment.⁹³

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The Divine Mercy revealed by Jesus in the Paschal events falls within the category of mystery. Redemption, justification, and salvation are manifestations of the reality which can be recognized only in faith.

The sacrifice of Jesus reveals the spiritual dimension of mercy and hence the eschatological reality. *Mysterium paschale* unveils the fact that God’s merciful plan is not limited to the world of temporal goods, but through them refers human persons to the goods to come. The mercy revealed in the Paschal Mystery anticipates the life and the gifts mankind will receive in the world of fulfilled hope. The mercy of the cross and the resurrection anticipate the revelation of the perfect nature of God, which is love.

1989 (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1989), Section 4, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19891208_xxiii-world-day-for-peace.html.

⁹² See J o h n P a u l I I, “Love is the Most Powerful Force in Society.” Message for World Migrant Day 1991, Vatican, August 21, 1991, Section 4, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English Edition, September 16, 1991: 1–2.

⁹³ See J o h n P a u l I I, “Message of the Holy Father for the Sixth World Day of the Sick, February 11, 1998,” Vatican, June 29, 1997, Section 5, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/sick/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_29061997_world-day-of-the-sick-1998.html.

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ABSTRACT / ABSTRAKT

Agnieszka DUDEK-KOWALSKA, Mercy as Fruit of the Paschal Mystery in the Theology of Pope John Paul II: The Source of Christian Hope

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The purpose of this paper is to explain the soteriology of the Paschal events in the context of the Divine Mercy. This interpretation, proposed by John Paul II, is a new input in the field of dogmatic theology in Catholicism. A creative comparison of the attribute of mercy with the mysteries of the salvific events of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has contributed to the development of major soteriological categories, understood as the fruits of the Paschal Mystery.

Within the framework of traditional notions of redemption, justification, and salvation, the author analyzes chosen issues of the theology advanced by John Paul II. When it comes to the category of redemption, they include: mercy as love conquering sin, mercy as victory over death, and mercy as reconciliation with the Father. As far as the category of justification is concerned, the following notions have been analyzed: love versus justice, the merit of justification, doing justice to the love of the Father. With respect to the mercy of salvation, the following issues have been reviewed: the covenant with the whole of mankind, the gift of a new creation, and anticipation of “a new heaven and a new earth.”

Keywords: mercy, Christian hope, justice, Paschal Mystery, redemption, justification, salvation, resurrection, John Paul II

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Agnieszka DUDEK-KOWALSKA, Miłosierdzie jako owoc misterium paschalnego w teologii Jana Pawła II. Źródło chrześcijańskiej nadziei

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Celem artykułu jest ukazanie soteriologii wydarzeń paschalnych w kontekście Bożego miłosierdzia. Ujęcie to, którego dokonał Jan Paweł II, stanowi ważny wkład w dziedzinę teologii dogmatycznej. Twórcze zestawienie miłosierdzia jako przymiotu Boga z tajemnicą wydarzeń zbawczych śmierci i zmartwychwstania Jezusa Chrystusa w ich ujęciu przez Jana Pawła II pozwoliło na analizę podstawowych kategorii soteriologicznych: odkupienia, usprawiedliwienia i zbawienia, rozumianych jako owoce misterium paschalnego. W przypadku kategorii odkupienia podjęto problem miłosierdzia jako miłości zwyciężającej grzech, miłosierdzia jako zwycięstwa nad śmiercią i miłosierdzia jako pojednania z Ojcem. W analizie kategorii usprawiedliwienia rozróżniono miłość i sprawiedliwość oraz przedstawiono istotę usprawiedliwienia i zadośćuczynienia miłości Ojca. W ramach analizy kategorii miłosierdzia zbawienia wskazano na znaczenie pojęć przymierza z całą ludzkością, daru nowego stworzenia i zapowiedzi „nowego nieba i nowej ziemi”.

Słowa kluczowe: miłosierdzie, chrześcijańska nadzieja, sprawiedliwość, misterium paschalne, odkupienie, usprawiedliwienie, zbawienie, zmartwychwstanie, Jan Paweł II

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