

My dear friends and pilgrims,

As our pilgrimage through Poland comes to an end, I find myself thinking less about how many places we visited and more about what those places have done to us.

We began this journey following the path of Divine Mercy, but somewhere along the way, we discovered that mercy demands to dwell in our hearts. It is the gift of God and the plea of the human spirit to change the way we see God and the way we see one another.

Poland has taught us something profound. Faith does not mean escaping suffering. Faith means discovering that suffering does not have the final word. History can wound us, but it does not have to imprison us. Hatred can destroy buildings, cities, and even lives, but it cannot ultimately destroy the human soul when that soul remains open to God.

Again and again, Poland whispered the same truth to us: what is destroyed can be rebuilt. What is wounded can be healed. What is lost can still be entrusted to God. And what seems impossible can become the very place where mercy begins.

We came carrying our own stories, our own questions, our own griefs, our own hopes. Some of us came looking for answers. Some came simply wanting to walk. Some of us did not even know what we were looking for.

But God knew.

And now the most important part begins. Because a Christian pilgrimage cannot end at the airport. It cannot end when we unpack our luggage, organize our photographs, or tell our families about Poland. If this journey has been real, then something must remain after we return.

More patience. More compassion. A deeper reverence for every human life. A greater willingness to forgive. A stronger desire to pray. A heart more attentive to the lonely, the forgotten, the wounded, and the person sitting right in front of us.

Mercy must now have our hands. Mercy must have our voices. Mercy must have our homes, our friendships, our parishes, our choices, and our lives.

At the end of this pilgrimage, I am deeply grateful for each of you. We have prayed together, reflected together, walked together, eaten together, laughed together, waited for one another, become tired together, learned together, and carried one another in ways we may never fully realize. Somewhere between the churches, buses, meals, holy places, long roads, and quiet prayers, a small community of pilgrims became a family.

And now we return to another road: Home. But we do not return as tourists who have completed an itinerary. We return as pilgrims who have received something really precious. And what we have received cannot simply be kept.

The pilgrimage ends when our feet leave Poland. But the mission begins when those same feet walk through our own front doors. We came to Poland searching for the story of Divine Mercy. Now Divine Mercy must become part of our own story.

We have prayed, “Jesus, I trust in You.” Now our lives must say it. We have walked through the places where mercy was proclaimed. Now we must become the places where mercy is found.

The pilgrimage is finished. The road of mercy is not. We came to Poland as pilgrims of mercy. We return home as its witnesses and missionaries of the gifts and blessings we have received.

Continued prayers and blessings; buen camino! Dzień dobry.

Your parish priest and co-pilgrim on the journey,  
Fr JC Merino