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## **John Paul II: Benedict XVI to the Polish bishops for the 100th anniversary of Wojtyla's birth, "he aroused renewed admiration for Christ and His Church"**

"When, on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1978, cardinal Wojtyla was elected Successor to St Peter, the Church was in a dramatic situation", Benedict XVI writes in a letter to the Polish bishops for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of John Paul II's birth. The text, published by the News Office of the Episcopal Conference of Poland, points out that the discussions about the implementation of the magisterium of the Second Vatican Council made the "sociologists of the time compare the situation of the Church to that of the Soviet Union under Gorbachev, where, in looking for the reforms it needed, the whole powerful image of the Soviet state eventually collapsed". Nevertheless, John Paul II "was able to arouse a renewed admiration for Christ and His Church". In describing how the Polish Pope had been impressed by the message of Divine Mercy, Benedict XVI tells about the humbleness with which Wojtyla accepted the initial refusal of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, then led by Joseph Ratzinger, to celebrate Divine Mercy on the first Sunday after Easter, and then proposed a constructive solution, which did preserve the historical meaning of Dominica in Albis. Finally, the Pope Emeritus emphasises the "inner unity of John Paul II's message and Pope Francis's fundamental intentions", since "our moral efforts are made in the light of God's mercy, which revealed itself to be the strength that heals our weakness".

Valentina Bombelli