



KARDINAL DR. CHRISTOPH SCHÖNBORN  
ERZBISCHOF VON WIEN

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Dear Friends and Missionaries of the Divine Mercy at the  
Australian Apostolic Congresses in Sydney and Melbourne (October 5<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>),

“The apostles rejoined Jesus and told him all they had done and taught. And he said to them, ‘Come away to some lonely place all by yourselves and rest for a while’; for there were so many coming and going that there was no time for them even to eat. So they went off in the boat to a lonely place where they could be by themselves. But people saw them going, and many recognized them; and from every town they all hurried to the place on foot and reached it before them. So as he stepped ashore he saw a large crowd; and he took pity on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he set himself to teach them a long time.” (Mk 6:30-34)

“He set himself to teach them a long time.” This sentence in the Gospel moves me always deeply. Jesus’ great compassion will express itself, toward the people who followed him to this place at the Lake, first of all by the fact that he will be teaching them. As we know, teaching belongs indeed to the works of mercy. Jesus teaches them and they do not get tired by his word, because “he taught them with authority, unlike their own scribes.” (Mt 7:29) Jesus spoke many hours, and everybody was paying attention to all his words, listening to his Word. Jesus feels compassion with us first for our lack of knowledge, for our ignorance. The bread we need, before all, is his Word. Without this, we are like “sheep without a shepherd”.

I was a student of Professor Joseph Ratzinger; what students specially admired in him that was his extraordinary gift of teaching; we experience it through his pontificate: he is a master in the Word of God, soused in the Word of God, living of the Word of God and transmitting it in a so living way, so simple and clear. To get filled by the words means: to get filled by the Compassion, the Mercy of God. This need to enter our lives: we need to be formed by the Word of Jesus. His words come directly from the source of Mercy: the Father's Heart. Pope Benedict likes to meditate Jesus’ words in Saint John: “My words are not mine, but the Word of the One who

sends me.” (Jn 14:24) Jesus’ Word comes immediately from the Fathers Heart. From there he draws them, His Word and His Mercy.

The disciples needed a long time before entering Jesus’ Mercy. It was a difficult way Jesus went with them, until they grasped his Mercy and practiced it. May these Congresses in Australia and Oceania, under the Presidency of His Excellency Alapati Mataeliga, Archbishop of Samoa and Oceanian WACOM Coordinator, with the spiritual support of Australian Bishops, become a spark of the Divine Mercy for the growth of the knowledge and the love of Gods Unconditional Mercy !

*+ Chintyá Card. Lhoiboru*

To :  
Suzanne Austin, WACOM Australian General Secretary, WACOM Committee of Coordination  
John Canavan, WACOM Australian Committee  
Fr. Gregory Gawel, Rector of Divine Mercy Shrine in Keysborough