

Assassination attempt made John Paul II more devoted to Fatima, Cardinal Dziwisz recalls

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John Paul II's former secretary, Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz of Krakow, said last week that the late Pontiff became more devoted to Our Lady of Fatima after the attempt on his life of May 13, 1981, as he was convinced her intercession saved him.

"Before the attempt, (John Paul II) did not devote much time to the message of Fatima, but he certainly had visited the Shrine and knew about the devotion to our Lady that is very widespread throughout the world," the cardinal said during a visit to Portugal.

"After the attempt on his life in St. Peter's Square," he continued, the Pope's attitude changed. "He became convinced that Our Lady of Fatima saved him, and he entered into the secret of the message of Fatima," he said.

Cardinal Dziwisz said that he and the Pope often discussed Portugal and that the Pontiff felt close to the Portuguese people especially each May 13 and October 13, when he would appear on the balcony of St. Peter's Square to pray and sing the Ave Maria.

"I very much remember the three visits the Pope made to Portugal," the cardinal said, "and I'll never forget when he came to thank Our Lady of Fatima for his life."

John Paul II also had great admiration for "the devotion, prayer and ability to sacrifice of the devotees of Fatima," he added.

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