



Drawing Down  
**DIVINE MERCY**

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**APOSTOLATE FOR  
FAMILY  
CONSECRATION®**

*Founded in 1975*

To

**Pope John Paul II**

*and his vision for the civilization of love  
modeled on the Holy Family*

*and to my dear wife*

**Servant of God Gwen Cecilia Coniker**

*who gave her life for family consecration  
to Jesus, through Mary, in union with St. Joseph,  
in the spirit of our beloved Holy Father,  
Pope John Paul II, whom she loved dearly*



(For more information about Servant of God  
Gwen Coniker, see pages 807–813.)

## **Optional Resources to Enhance your 40-Day Preparation for the Feast of Divine Mercy**

This *Drawing Down Divine Mercy* prayer and meditation book can be used with the following resources. These presentations may be viewed by yourself or with others.

### **Commentaries on Drawing Down Divine Mercy with Fr. George Kosicki, CSB (#1017-287)**

In this 6-part program, Fr. Kosicki explains Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Rich in Mercy*. Fr. Kosicki expounds on themes such as the Messianic message of mercy, Mary as Mother of Mercy and how the Church proclaims and practices mercy.

Recommended Viewing Schedule:

Week 1: Summary of the encyclical *Rich in Mercy*  
(35 min.)

Week 2: He Who Sees Me Sees the Father; The Messianic  
Message (30 min.)

Week 3: The Old Testament; Mary's Role & The Prodigal  
Son (32 min.)

Week 4: The Paschal Mystery; Love More Powerful than  
Death (36 min.)

Week 5: Mother of Mercy; Mercy From Generation to  
Generation (35 min.)

Week 6: Church Professes and Proclaims Mercy; Putting  
Mercy into Practice; Prayer of the Church for Mercy (49 min.)

### **Day of Grace: Celebrating Divine Mercy (#147-95)**

In this 3-part video program, you will learn about the essence of the Divine Mercy devotion, particularly the Feast of Mercy and its connection to Pope John Paul II. Each of these 1-hour programs are ideal for viewing on Divine Mercy Sunday.

*See pages 846–850 for more resources.*

**You may download these presentations and the  
readings of the 40-day meditations for free at  
[www.familyland.org](http://www.familyland.org).**

# CONTENTS

<b>Foreword</b> . . . . .	xi
---------------------------	----

<b>Introduction</b> . . . . .	3
-------------------------------	---

## **Part I: Forty-Day Meditations on Rich in Mercy . 7**

Encyclical by Pope John Paul II

Retranslation and outline by Fr. George Kosicki

I. He Who Sees Me Sees the Father . . . . .	18
II. The Messianic Proclamation . . . . .	28
III. The Old Testament. . . . .	36
IV. The Parable of the Prodigal Son . . . . .	51
V. The Paschal Mystery . . . . .	68
VI. “Mercy from Generation to Generation”. . . . .	115
VII. The Mercy of God in the Mission of the Church. . . . .	134
VIII. The Prayer of the Church in Our Times. . . . .	170

## **Part II: Prayers and Meditations**

1. Sign of the Cross. . . . .	191
1a. Consecration to Jesus through the Immaculate Conception . . . . .	191
2. The Magnificat . . . . .	192
2a. The Family Apostolate’s Morning Offering* . . . . .	193
2a.2 The Present Moment Prayer . . . . .	194
2b. Hail, Holy Queen* . . . . .	194
2c. The Angelus* . . . . .	194
2c.1. Regina Caeli . . . . .	195
2e. Immaculate Conception Prayer for The Apostolate* . . . . .	197
2f. St. Joseph Prayer for The Apostolate* . . . . .	197
2g. St. Michael the Archangel* . . . . .	198
2h. Guardian Angel* . . . . .	199
2i. Daily Scripture Meditations . . . . .	199

*\*Daily, \*\*Weekly, \*\*\*Monthly*

2i.1	First Corinthians 13:1–7 . . . . .	199
2i.2	Colossians 3 . . . . .	199
2i.3	Matthew 5:21–26 . . . . .	201
2i.4	Luke 9:57–62 . . . . .	201
2j.	Prayer for Gwen and Family Unity . . . . .	202
2k.	The Holy Spirit: Secret to Sanctity and Happiness*, by Cardinal Mercier . . . . .	203
4.	Apostolate’s Act of Consecration* . . . . .	203
5.	Short Form Consecration Prayer . . . . .	204
6.	The Holy Rosary* (including how to pray the Rosary) . . . . .	206
6a.	Apostles’ Creed . . . . .	209
6b.	Our Father . . . . .	210
6c.	Hail Mary . . . . .	210
7a.	Glory Be . . . . .	211
7b.	Fatima Rosary Prayer . . . . .	211
7c.	The Apostolate’s Motto & Short Form Consecration Prayer. . . . .	211
7d.	Mysteries of the Rosary . . . . .	212
8.	St. Joseph Prayer after the Rosary . . . . .	252
8a.	Examination of Conscience Prayer . . . . .	252
9.	Act of Contrition . . . . .	253
10.	Seed-Charity Prayer in the Spirit of St. Francis* (one concept a day) . . . . .	254
11a.	Act of Spiritual Communion* . . . . .	255
11b.	Mother Teresa’s Nazareth Prayer for the Family . . . . .	255
14.	Act of Consecration to St. Joseph** (Wed.) . . . . .	256
14a.	Seven Sorrows and Joys of St. Joseph Chaplet** (Wed. in place of Rosary) . . . . .	257
17.	The Chaplet of the Holy Family . . . . .	265
18.	St. Ignatius Prayer. . . . .	266
19.	The 12 Promises of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary . . . . .	266




\*Daily, \*\*Weekly, \*\*\*Monthly

20.	Divine Mercy . . . . .	269
20a.	Saint Maria Faustina of the Most Blessed Sacrament . . . . .	271
20b.	The Essence of the Divine Mercy Devotion . . . . .	274
20c.	The Image of The Divine Mercy . . . . .	280
20d.	Entrustment Prayer . . . . .	280
20e.	Divine Mercy Sunday . . . . .	282
20e.1	Preparation for Divine Mercy Sunday . . .	282
20e.2	Divine Mercy Novena . . . . .	282
20e.3	How is Mercy Sunday Celebrated? . . . . .	282
20e.4	Reconciliation: Tribunal of Mercy. . . . .	282
20e.5	The Holy Eucharist: The Presence of Mercy	282
20e.6	Adoration of the Eucharist . . . . .	282
20e.7	The Eucharistic Offering . . . . .	282
20e.8	Union through Holy Communion . . . . .	282
20f.	The Chaplet of Divine Mercy . . . . .	283
20g.	The Three O'Clock Hour of Great Mercy .	284
20h.	Proclaiming Mercy Prepares for His Coming Again. . . . .	284
20i.	Selected Prayers from the Diary. . . . .	288
20i.1	Saint Faustina's Litany of The Divine Mercy . . . . .	289
20i.2	At the Feet of Christ in the Eucharist	291
20i.3	In Thanksgiving . . . . .	294
20i.4	For Divine Mercy . . . . .	294
20i.5	For Priests . . . . .	295
20i.6	For One's Country . . . . .	295
20i.7	To Obtain Love for God . . . . .	296
20i.8	To Obtain an Understanding of God .	296
20i.9	Petitions of Trust . . . . .	296
20i.10	To The Divine Mercy: Prayer of Trust	296
20i.11	To Be Merciful to Others . . . . .	297
20i.12	For the Conversion of Sinners . . . . .	299

20i.13 In Time of Suffering . . . . .	301
20i.14 For a Good Death . . . . .	302
20i.15 To the Mother of God . . . . .	303
20i.16 Prayer to obtain grace through the Intercession of St. Faustina . . . . .	303
20i.17 The Canonization of Saint Faustina . . . . .	305
20i.18 Memorare To Saint Joseph . . . . .	306
20i.19 For Fidelity to God's Will . . . . .	306
20j. Homilies of Pope John Paul II on Divine Mercy . . . . .	307
20k Epilogue . . . . .	340
21. Holy Trinity Prayer in the Spirit of Fatima** (Thursday alternative). . . . .	353
21a. O Sacrament Most Holy. . . . .	353
21b. Jeremiah 29:11-14 . . . . .	353
21c. Divine Praises. . . . .	354
21d. Prayer After Holy Communion . . . . .	354
22. Act of Reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Spirit of Mother Teresa** (Friday alternative) . . . . .	355
22b. Anima Christi . . . . .	356
22c. Jesus Prayer . . . . .	357
23. Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. . . . .	357
23a. Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus . . . . .	359
23b. Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus . . . . .	361
24. Scripture Passages for the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart and the Holy Family in the Home	364
24a. Family Consecration Covenant Prayer. . . . .	365
25. Scripture Passages for Consecrating a Business. . . . .	366
29a. Daily Offering . . . . .	366
29b. Act of Faith & Intercession (at Mass) . . . . .	367
30. The Memorare . . . . .	367
31a. Immaculate Conception Prayer for All . . . . .	367

\*Daily, \*\*Weekly, \*\*\*Monthly

34.	Litany of Joyful Thanksgiving*** (Sunday alternative) . . . . .	368
34a.	Grace Before Meals* . . . . .	369
34b.	Grace After Meals* . . . . .	369
35.	Plea to the Everliving God for the Unborn . . . . .	370
40.	Litany of the Patrons of the Apostolate for Family Consecration** (Tues. alternative) . . . . .	370
40a.	Prayer for Beatification of August Mauge . . . . .	374
40b.	Prayer to One's Patron Saints . . . . .	375
42.	Reparation for Sin: Excerpts from Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Constitution on the Revision of Indulgences . . . . .	376
45a.	Summary of Norms for Gaining Indulgences for the Holy Souls in Purgatory or Oneself. . . . .	378
45b.	Additional Grants for Indulgences . . . . .	380
45c.	Eternal Rest . . . . .	384
45d.	Prayer of St. Gertrude the Great for the Holy Souls in Purgatory. . . . .	384
46.	Veni Creator** (Mon. alternative) . . . . .	386
46a.	Come Holy Spirit . . . . .	387
46e.	See #2k	
46f.	Prayers for the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit . . . . .	387
49b.	Consecration to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom, through the Blessed Virgin Mary, in Union with St. Joseph *** (First Saturday) . . . . .	389
50b.	Act of Consecration to Jesus through Mary by St. Maximilian Kolbe . . . . .	392
50f.	Jesus Defines Consecration: John 17 . . . . .	393
50h.	Act of Faith . . . . .	397
50i.	Act of Hope . . . . .	397
50j.	Act of Charity . . . . .	397
53.	Examination of Conscience Exercises*	
53a.	Scripture's Four C's . . . . .	398
53c.	The Spiritual Works of Mercy . . . . .	402
53d.	The Corporal Works of Mercy . . . . .	402

53i.	Examination of Conscience Reflections by Jerome F. Coniker. . . . .	403
53m.	Five Steps to Confession . . . . .	407
53n.	The Interior Life. . . . .	408
53o.	Scriptural Examination. . . . .	413
54.	Ten Steps to Mental Prayer. . . . .	414
55.	Five Steps to Spiritual Reading (Lectio Divina)	416
59.	The Way of the Cross with Reflections on Divine Mercy . . . . .	419
64.	Excerpt from the Encyclical <i>The Redeemer of Man</i> on the Eucharist . . . . .	448
64a.	Privilege of Receiving Holy Communion Twice a Day. . . . .	450
65c.	Excerpt from <i>Lumen Gentium</i> . . . . .	455
67a.	 Friends of the Cross by St. Louis de Montfort . . . . .	459
68.	 Alone With God by Francis Cardinal Arinze . . . . .	515
70.	Credo of the People of God, by Pope Paul VI** (Sunday alternative) . . . . .	635
72.	 Divine Providence by Francis Cardinal Arinze . . . . .	649
73.	Light, Salt, and Leaven by Bishop Alvaro del Portillo. . . . .	732
74.	Seven Prayers in the Lord's Prayer for Nurturing New Covenant Life by Fr. Bernard Geiger, O.F.M., Conv. . . . .	747
	<b>Appendix A: Apostolate for Family Consecration</b>	<b>755</b>
	<b>Appendix B: Spiritual Practices . . . . .</b>	<b>815</b>
	<b>Sponsors . . . . .</b>	<b>833</b>
	<b>Index . . . . .</b>	<b>838</b>
	<b>Resources on Divine Mercy . . . . .</b>	<b>848</b>

## Foreword

THE STRATEGIC VISION of Jesus Christ is clear: “That all may be one” (Jn 17:11). His mission is equally clear: “to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and release to prisoners” (Lk 4:18). His objectives are manifold, but His strategy is to effect the adoption of every person as a child of God. This means that Jesus strategically uses the temporal reality of the *human family* as a model for the Church. In other words, the Church was founded by our Lord to be the *Family of God*. He Himself deliberately entered the world through a mother and was educated in a family setting. He introduced God as Father, Himself as the Son, named those who did the will of His Father as His brothers and sisters, and gave us His mother to be our own.

This is why Church communion must always be seen in a family context. The “People of God” are not just “people,” they are more precisely *children*, and unless we become so, we cannot enter His kingdom. In order for us to be of God, we are to be “a people set apart” or consecrated; and applying the same argument, the Church must therefore become “a universal family set apart”—composed of families consecrated to the one God, restored and united in Christ, by the healing power of the Holy Spirit.

We must be set apart from the world before we can be united into the Church. But while these truths are somewhat difficult to understand, we must continue pondering them in our hearts with the *simplicity* of children. Simple prayer is the key to progressive simplicity, which in turn leads us to a deeper faith. This is why I am so thankful to the Lord and Our Lady for the Apostolate for Family

Consecration, a ministry to the family undertaken by families themselves! The family apostolate now offers us this prayer & meditation book which contains volumes of truths “in a few precise words.” More than a compendium of prayers and lists, it includes a way of looking at Christian life that is precisely and unerringly in a family context.

We must compliment the family apostolate for its transparent openness to reveal itself, share its gifts and in the process, enrich itself with the gifts of others. Cardinal Francis Arinze’s contribution to this book [see sections 68 and 72], needless to say, is particularly uplifting, for it is a veritable personal retreat guide. The good Cardinal himself is a statement of simplicity. The Coniker family has acknowledged and responded to a call beyond their own family’s; and because of this, they have become a real treasure to the Universal Family. The Apostolate for Family Consecration is no longer theirs alone; it effectively belongs to the whole Church.

I fully endorse and encourage married couples to avail of this manual of family spirituality. It will clarify greatly their grasp of the “true and proper ministry” that is theirs to undertake. It is a great outline for the clergy’s ministry to families. Let us not mistake the overall goal of this book: to effect a consecration—a “setting apart” for God—of all families, as a preparation for ecclesial communion. Let us avail of its spiritual wealth to prepare for the “year of favor from the Lord.”



✠ Jaime Cardinal L. Sin

*Jaime Card. Sin*

Archbishop of Manila  
Villa San Miguel, 18 January 1998  
Feast of the Santo Niño





**Pope John Paul II considered *Rich in Mercy* to be his most important encyclical.**

## Introduction

We all need Divine Mercy. As we enter more deeply into these critical and difficult times, the need to ask Our Lord to protect us and sustain our hope becomes more apparent. The purpose of this prayer book is to help you understand the richness of Divine Mercy and to bring you into a deeper union with God through being merciful to others by action, word, and prayer, and by forgiving those who have hurt you. As you pray, and not just read, this book, you will discover different spiritual realities that apply to your life.

This book is a treasure. A serviceman stationed in Afghanistan, Dr. Clyde Redmond, had written to us explaining what a treasure the earlier edition of the Divine Mercy prayer book had been to him. He had read it every night and gained confidence that God would protect him.

Part 1 of *Drawing Down Divine Mercy* is organized into 40 daily readings that focus on Pope John Paul II's encyclical, *Rich in Mercy*. It also includes other meditations on Divine Mercy that draw you deeper into this devotion.

Pope John Paul II said many times during his 26-year pontificate that *Rich in Mercy* was the most important encyclical he had written. In this encyclical he explains “that man cannot be manifested in the full dignity of his nature without reference...to God. Man and man’s lofty calling are revealed in Christ through the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love.” To really get to know Pope John Paul II, enter into the meditations in this book.

As you proceed through the daily meditations, do not feel obliged to finish all of the specified readings for every day. If your heart is moved

to remain on one part of the day's reading, then focus your meditation on that part and talk to God about it, trusting that it is all He wants you to read that day.

To help you grasp and apply what you read in the daily meditations, you may want to watch, once a week, a series of videos that go along with this book. On these video programs, Fr. George Kociski, explains the *Rich in Mercy* encyclical. To learn more about this video program and other programs that will help you and your parish celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday, please see pages 846–850.

*Drawing Down Divine Mercy* can be read any time during the year, but it is most powerful when used in preparation for the Feast of Divine Mercy, the first Sunday after Easter and an official feast day of the Church. Therefore, I encourage you to read the daily meditations in Part 1, beginning two weeks after Ash Wednesday. Then, for forty days, take the journey in plumbing the depths of Pope John Paul II's spirit. The last nine days include the Divine Mercy Novena, which begins on Good Friday and leads up to Divine Mercy Sunday.

Our Lord told Saint Faustina, who later recorded this in her *Diary* (#699):

*“My daughter, tell the whole world about my inconceivable mercy. I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners....On that day, all the divine floodgates through which grace flow are opened. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet. My mercy is so great that no mind, be it of man or of angel, will be able to fathom it throughout all eternity. The Feast of Mercy emerged from My very depths*

*of tenderness. It is My desire that it be solemnly celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter. **Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the Fount of My Mercy.***

*“I am giving them the last hope of salvation; that is the Feast of My Mercy.” (Diary, 965).*

As our Lord explained to Saint Faustina, Divine Mercy Sunday is a very special day of grace. On this day, to receive these special graces from God, you need to receive Holy Communion, go to Confession on or up to eight days before or after this day, and honor the image of Divine Mercy (see section 20e.3 on page 187). Also, please do all you can to be an instrument of Mercy by giving this book to your friends. Tell them about the good news of Divine Mercy!

Part 2 of *Drawing Down Divine Mercy* includes many prayers and litanies and other writings, such as Cardinal Francis Arinze’s *Alone with God* and *Divine Providence*, as well as St. Louis de Montfort’s *Friends of the Cross*, Bishop Alvaro del Portillo’s *Light, Salt and Leaven*, Divine Mercy Stations of the Cross and many other valuable resources that will move your heart. These prayers and writings can be prayed and meditated on throughout the year. Many of these writings also have video programs, called *Peace of Heart Forums*, that go along with them, making them an ideal resource for individual learning and prayer, or for group study. To learn more about the *Peace of Heart Forums*, please see Appendix A, pages 774–777.

Using the daily mediations in this book starting two weeks after Ash Wednesday makes a great Lenten practice. A companion to this book is our *Preparation for Total Consecration to Jesus through*

*Mary for Families* prayer book. We recommend that families use this latter book each year, beginning November 5, in preparation for consecrating their families to the Holy Family on December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, ending six days later on December 14. (This would make a good Advent practice.) Please note, however, that you can start this consecration on other dates as specified in the book.

We believe that once enough people have made their consecration and have abandoned themselves to Divine Mercy by being merciful to others, there will be a tremendous miracle of grace in our society—the Era of Peace that Our Lady of Fatima promised to the world, with the Holy Family of Fatima as our model.

Please also avail yourselves of the many other resources that will help consecrate your family in the truth by visiting [www.familyland.org](http://www.familyland.org) and by accessing our Interactive Family Catechism at [www.familycatechism.com](http://www.familycatechism.com).

# Part 1

## Forty-day Meditations on *Rich in Mercy*

*(Dives in Misericordia)*

Encyclical by  
**Pope John Paul II**



## **Retranslation and Outline** **by Fr. George Kosicki, C.S.B.**

### **Acknowledgment**

My special thanks go to Father Francis Jaworski, M.I.C. (Provincial Superior of the Marians of the Immaculate Conception, Association of Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, MA), for his patient and careful checking of the original Polish text as the English translation was read aloud. We were both enriched in hearing the message of mercy once again.

### **Peace of Heart Forum: Rich in Mercy** **Video Series: 1017-287**

#### **Week 1**

Show: Episodes 1 & 2  
Topic: The Summary of  
*Rich in Mercy*  
Readings: Introduction  
and Sections 1–3

#### **Week 2**

Show: Episodes 3 & 4  
Topics: He Who Sees Me  
Sees the Father; The  
Messianic Message  
Readings: Sections 4–7

#### **Week 3**

Show: Episodes 5 & 6  
Topics: The Old  
Testament; Mary's  
Role & The Prodigal  
Son  
Readings: Section 8

#### **Week 4**

Show: Episodes 7 & 8  
Topics: The Paschal  
Mystery; Love More  
Powerful than Death  
Readings: Sections 9–12

#### **Week 5**

Show: Episodes 9 & 10  
Topics: Mother of Mercy;  
Mercy from Generation  
to Generation  
Readings: Sections 13–14

#### **Week 6**

Show: Episodes 11 & 12  
Topics: Church  
Professes and  
Proclaims Mercy;  
Putting Mercy into  
Practice; Prayer of the  
Church for Mercy  
Readings: Section 15

## Week 1

**Readings:** Introduction & Sections 1–3

**Days:** 1–7



## Day 1

*Come Holy Spirit, help us to discover God's merciful plan for our lives by being merciful to those you place in our path. Help us to trust in the Merciful Heart of Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Queen and Mother of Mercy, in union with St. Joseph, an instrument of mercy.*

### INTRODUCTION TO RICH IN MERCY

*by Fr. George Kociski*

#### **Why a fresh translation of the encyclical "Rich in Mercy"?**

The message of the encyclical on Divine Mercy needs to be made clear and strong. It needs to continue to reach those it should. The message is so important and the needs of the times are so urgent that the message must be broadcast again and again in the fullness of its power.

The original Polish text, written in longhand by Pope John Paul II in his native tongue, flows ever so smoothly, using words that are delicately and specifically chosen. The Latin and English translations, which had to be done quickly and immediately for the Vatican Polygot Press, do not convey the full strength and beauty of the original text.

The intention of this translation, using the original Polish as well as the English and Latin Vatican Polygot Press translations as a basis, is to convey the spiritual power of the message. There are a number of factors that would need to be combined to do this with the greatest force: a knowledge of Polish, an ease with the existential philosophical mode of thinking of John Paul II, a thorough grasp of his message of mercy and the origins of his concern about mercy, and a knowledge

of the English language. The author cannot claim expertise in all of the above needed factors, but is very much aware of the urgency of the message of mercy and the origins of the concern of Pope John Paul. May his inadequacy in Polish and English, and his weakness in existential philosophy, be overcome by his burning desire to convey the Holy Father's message of mercy.



The origins of the knowledge and concern of Pope John Paul II for the message of Divine Mercy come from his personal involvement with the messages of Divine Mercy revealed to Saint Faustina Kowalska (1905–1938) in his home archdiocese of Cracow, Poland. During the 1930's Sister Faustina received revelations from Our Lord telling her of His infinite mercy for mankind. He asked that His mercy be made known to everyone now, “while it still is the time for mercy.” As Archbishop of Cracow, the then Karol Wojtyla introduced Sister Faustina's cause for canonization. He was instrumental in conscripting

the leading Polish theologian, the Reverend Professor Ignacy Rozycki, to prepare a definitive study of her writings and the heroicity of her life. After ten years of exhaustive study, Professor Rozycki submitted a highly favorable document of support for the cause of her canonization.

Now is the time to proclaim God's great mercy, while it is still the time of His mercy. Today is the day of His mercy, before the day of His judgment. In regard to the translation itself, the author tried to bring out the force of the Pope's message by using the English phrases and words that seemed to be as strong as his words. The changes made most often were an addition of the phrase or word referred to in a reflexive pronoun. Often, the sentences or paragraphs were so long that the "it" became ambiguous and the sentence lost its force. This repeating of the subject makes the sentences clear and strong. In some chapters, sentences were divided in order to convey the full impact of the message.

Three kinds of summaries of the encyclical are presented as aids to understanding the message:

- An **Abstract** which gives the sequence of the topics and the flow of the main concepts;
- A **Schematic Summary** which gathers the key points in sweeping statements that can be used to teach, preach, and help to remember this message of mercy; and
- A **Sense-line Summary** which stresses the main points of each section in short phrases, conveying the strength of the message.

## A Trilogy of Encyclicals

The three encyclicals of Pope John Paul II form a trilogy, as he himself expressed in the third letter. The first letter, *Redeemer of Man*, points out Jesus Christ as “the center of history and the universe” who reveals to each and every person their identity and dignity. He further points out that the Church is the link and the way to Christ for every person, no matter what the problems. The second letter of the trilogy is this one, *Rich in Mercy*, in which John Paul II points out the Father as rich in mercy. The Father’s mercy is shown to be revealed in Christ Jesus, mercy incarnate, as the answer to the lack of peace in the world. In the third letter of the trilogy, *Lord and Giver of Life*, John Paul II shows that the Holy Spirit is the one who convicts us of our greatest sin, namely, the practical atheism of the world. At the same time, he shows that the Holy Spirit brings our sins to the cross to be washed in the blood of Jesus, so that we might receive His saving love and mercy for eternal life.

This trilogy is a clear response to the greatest problems of our day. Sin is the issue of our day, and mercy is the answer.

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✠ Reflect on the “Introduction” to *Divine Mercy* (#20, page 269) and pray the *Entrustment Prayer* (#20d, page 280).

## Day 2

*Come Holy Spirit, help us to discover God's merciful plan for our lives by being merciful to those you place in our path. Help us to trust in the Merciful Heart of Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Queen and Mother of Mercy, in union with St. Joseph, an instrument of mercy.*

### INTRODUCTION TO RICH IN MERCY

*by Fr. George Kociski (continued)*

#### Abstract

The theme of the encyclical letter *Dives in Misericordia* is Divine Mercy. Pope John Paul II develops the thesis that to practice, proclaim, and pray for mercy is the mission of the Church and the whole world. The letter is divided into eight chapters with fifteen subtopics.

The Pope expands the biblical text Jn. 14:9, "He who sees Me sees the Father," by discussing the revelation of mercy and the incarnation of mercy. He encourages us all to open our minds and hearts more widely to Christ.

"The Messianic Message" of Chapter Two describes "When Christ began to do and to Teach." The Messiah is a clear sign of God who is love. Through His lifestyle and through His actions, Jesus revealed that love is present in the world.

"The Old Testament" is the topic of Chapter Three. The concept of mercy and its history are developed. Mercy is contrasted with God's justice.

"The Parable of the Prodigal Son" is the topic of Chapter Four. It brings focus to the relationship between justice and love that is manifested as mercy. In this parable, love is transformed into mercy. A particular focus on human dignity is presented, as well as the faithfulness of a Father's love.

In “The Paschal Mystery,” Chapter Five, mercy is revealed in the Cross and Resurrection. It emphasizes that love is present in the world and that this love is more powerful than any kind of evil. Believing in this love means believing in mercy. “Love More Powerful Than Death, More Powerful Than Sin” is expanded. A discussion of Mary, the Blessed Mother of Jesus and the “Mother of Mercy”, concludes, the chapter.



*Reconciliation and Penance—the Sacrament of Mercy*

Chapter Six proclaims “Mercy...from Generation to Generation” and discusses the need for mercy for our generation. There are sources of uneasiness and a lack of peace attributed to our times. The question, “Is Justice Enough?” is raised. The Pope calls for a deeper power of love, for justice is not enough.

“The Mercy of God in the Mission of the Church” stresses the Church’s role to profess and proclaim the mercy of God, the most stupendous attribute of the Creator and Redeemer. “The Church Seeks to Put Mercy into Practice” for “Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” True mercy is, so to speak, the most profound source of justice.

Mercy is also the most perfect incarnation of “equality” between people. All people are invited to proclaim and introduce into life the mystery of mercy supremely revealed in Jesus Christ. “It is precisely in the name of this mystery that Christ teaches us to forgive always.” “... He who forgives and he who is forgiven encounter one another at an essential point, namely, the dignity or essential value of the person...”

The encyclical letter ends with “The Prayer of the Church in Our Times.” Prayer is needed to overcome modern man’s lack of courage to utter the word “mercy.” The Pope exhorts us to call upon the God who loves all people and desires every true good for each individual. He prays that the Love which is in the Father may once again be revealed at this stage of history. He concludes by pointing out that the very reason for the Church’s existence is to reveal God, who is Love and Mercy Itself.

### **Schematic Summary of Rich in Mercy**

The Papal Letter *Rich in Mercy* proclaims mercy as:

- The prophetic word of our time: the now word is MERCY!
- The content, power, and mission of Christ and His Church.
- The summary of the Gospel: “Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.”
- The parable of mercy: the Prodigal Son — the essence of mercy in the restored value of man.
- The answer to the question of “a lack of peace.”
- The summons to the Church and by the Church to practice, preach, and plead for mercy.

- The revelation of Jesus, mercy incarnate, centered in the crucified risen Jesus, continued in the Heart of Mary.
- The prayer for the presence of love, which is greater than evil, sin and death.
- The plea for us and the whole world.



*✠ While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man — though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. Not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received our reconciliation. (Romans 5:6–11)*

✠ Pray *For Divine Mercy* (#20i.4, page 294).