

20. Divine Mercy

For the Divine Mercy Chaplet, see #20f.

Pope John Paul II and God's Mercy:

"Right from the beginning of my ministry of St. Peter's in Rome, I have considered this message [of Divine Mercy] my special task. Providence has assigned it to me in the present situation of man, the Church and the world. It could be said that precisely this situation assigned that message to me as my task before God" (November 22, 1981, Shrine of Merciful Love in Collevaleza, Italy).

"On the threshold of the third millennium, I come to entrust to Him once more my Petrine ministry — 'Jesus, I trust in You!'...I took with me [the message of Divine Mercy] to the see of Peter and which in a sense forms the image of this Pontificate" (Shrine of Divine Mercy, Krakow-Lagiewniki, Poland, June 7, 1997).

"The Church must acknowledge as her chief duty *the proclamation and introduction into life*, the mystery of mercy, so perfectly revealed in Jesus Christ at every stage of history, especially in our modern age. Not only for the Church herself as the community of believers but also in a certain sense for all humanity. This mystery is the source of a life different from the life which can be built by human beings who are exposed to the oppressive forces of the threefold concupiscence active within them (Cf. 1 Jn 2:16). It is precisely in the name of this mystery of mercy that Christ teaches us to forgive always. How often we repeat the words of the prayer which He Himself taught us, asking '*forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.*'" (*Rich in Mercy*, #14).

"The Church proclaims the truth about God's mercy which is made known in the crucified and risen Christ and she makes it known in various ways. The Church also tries to be merciful to people through people because she considers this to be an indispensable condition for a better, "more human" world, today and tomorrow.

"And yet at no time and in no period of history — especially at a turning point like ours — can the Church forget about *prayer, which is a cry for the mercy of God* in the midst of the many forms of evil that weigh upon mankind and threaten it. This imploring of mercy is precisely the fundamental right and at the same time the duty of the Church in Christ Jesus. It is the right and duty of the Church toward God and at the same time toward humanity" (*Rich in Mercy*, #15).

See also the text of "Rich in Mercy" in section #102 and the text of Pope John Paul II's homilies on Divine Mercy, including the canonization of St. Faustina, in section #20f.

20a. Saint Maria Faustina of the Most Blessed Sacrament

Sister Faustina was born in 1905 and baptized as Helena, near Lodz in central Poland. She was the third of ten children of what were really poor, but pious parents. At the age of twenty, she joined the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy community, which is dedicated to helping young women in distress. This was her work until her death thirteen years later, in 1938, from tuberculosis.

Pope John Paul II called her "the great Apostle of Divine Mercy in our time" (April 10, 1994). On Divine Mercy Sunday, April 30, 2000, he canonized her and called her "God's gift to our time."

On February 22, 1931, this young Polish nun, Sr. Faustina Kowalska, saw a vision of Jesus with rays of mercy streaming from the area of His Heart. He told her to have an image painted to represent this vision and to sign it, "Jesus, I trust in You!" Calling her the Apostle and Secretary of His mercy, He ordered her to begin writing a diary so others would come to know and trust in Him.

In a series of revelations that followed between 1931 and 1938, He taught her that His mercy is unlimited and available even to the greatest sinners. He revealed special ways for people to respond to His mercy in their lives, and He gave her several promises for those who would trust in His mercy and show mercy to others.

By the time of Sr. Faustina's death in 1938, devotion to The Divine Mercy had already begun to spread throughout Eastern Europe. In July of 1940, Fr. Joseph Jarzebowski, a Polish Marian Priest fleeing from war-torn Poland, prayed to the merciful Savior to help him escape, vowing to spend the rest of his life spreading the Divine Mercy Devotion. He arrived safely on American soil in May, 1941, and Marian communities in Detroit and Washington, D.C., were soon distributing Mercy of God materials.

In 1944, a group of Marians opened a new house and apostolate on Eden Hill in Stockbridge, Massachusetts and began spreading the Devotion on a large scale. By 1953, the Marian apostolate on Eden Hill had become the international center for the Divine Mercy devotion, distributing more than 25 million pieces of mercy literature per year. In 1960, with donations from all over the world, the Marians on Eden Hill completed construction of a shrine to the Mercy of God.

The Shrine has now become the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, and the apostolate has become the Marian Helpers Center, a modern religious publishing house spreading devotion to the mercy of God and to Mary Immaculate.

The informative process for Sister Faustina's cause was begun in 1965. On April 18, 1993, Pope John Paul II beatified her — the occasion was Divine Mercy Sunday. Then, on April 30, 2000, the same pope canonized her. And again, the occasion was Divine Mercy Sunday. In his canonization homily, the Holy Father said: "Through the work of [this] Polish religious, this message [of mercy] has become linked forever to the 20th century, the last of the second millennium, and a bridge to the third... It is a ray of light to the men and women of our time."

20b. The Essence of the _Divine Mercy Devotion

20b.1 The Message of Divine Mercy

The message of the Divine Mercy is a call and challenge:

Trust in God's Mercy and Be Merciful.

The Message

The Message of Divine Mercy is that God is merciful. He is love itself poured out for us, and He wants no one to escape that merciful love.

The message is that God wants us to turn to Him with trust and repentance while it is still a time of mercy, before He comes as the just Judge. This turning with trust to Him who is Mercy itself is the only source of peace for mankind. Turning to and imploring God's mercy is the answer to the troubled world. There is no escaping that answer.

God's Mercy

Divine Mercy is God's love poured out on the undeserving in creating us, redeeming us and sanctifying us. It is "Love's second name" (*Rich in Mercy*, John Paul II).

Mercy has been described as love of the unlovable and forgiveness of the unforgivable. It is love in action.

The Response of Trust and Conversion

What God most wants of us is to turn to Him with *trust*. And the first act of trust is to *receive* His mercy. To trust God is to rely on Him who is Mercy itself. The Lord wants us to live with trust in Him in all circumstances. We trust Him because He is God, and He loves us and cares for us.

His mercy is always available to us, no matter what we have done or what state we are in, even if our sins are as black as night and we are filled with fears and anxieties.

"The greater the sinner, the greater the right he has to my mercy." (Diary*, 723)

But there is more we can do. As Catholics, as Christians, we can go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and be reconciled to God and to man. The Lord wants us to live reconciled with Him and one another

The Response of Mercy Toward Others

Not only are we to *receive* His mercy, but we are to *use* it, being merciful to others by our actions, by our words, and by our prayers; in other words by practicing the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.

The Corporal Works of Mercy are feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the travelers, comforting the prisoners, visiting the sick, and burying the dead. The Spiritual Works of Mercy include teaching the ignorant, praying for the living and the dead, correcting sinners, counseling those in doubt, consoling the sorrowful, bearing wrongs patiently, and forgiving wrongs willingly.

It's Scriptural

The message of mercy is the content and the challenge of Sacred Scripture. In the Hebrew Bible we see a God of mercy who calls His people to be merciful. In the New Testament Jesus exhorts us:

"Be merciful even as your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36).

He sets the highest goal for us and expects us to obtain it by His merciful love:

"Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy" (Mt 5:7).

When He comes again, He will judge us on our mercy toward one another:

"Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40).

Mercy — The Message and Response Through the Ages

The message and response of mercy is not something new. In the past, God spoke a message of mercy through the patriarchs and prophets — through Noah, Abraham, Moses, Elijah and many others.

In the last days God has spoken to us by His Son, Jesus Christ, who is Mercy personified and incarnated.

God continues to speak a word of mercy even to our generation, through the Church and its shepherds, and through holy men and women — mystics — whom God has chosen as His vessels.

In our century He revealed Himself to Blessed Faustina, a simple and holy nun in Poland during the 1930s. He called her to be His secretary and His apostle of mercy. He spoke to her of His mercy and the way He wants us to respond to it.

It's the Current Teaching of Pope John _Paul II

The message of The Divine Mercy — Jesus Himself — is at the heart of the gospel. The message of mercy presents the truth and the call of the gospel to our present age. This message of mercy is proclaimed by Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical *Rich in Mercy*, as the message for our age. His encyclical is a strong summons for us to implore mercy for ourselves and for the whole world — now! (see section 102.)

In the name of Jesus Christ crucified and risen from the dead, in the spirit of his messianic mission, which endures in the works of mankind, *we lift up our voice and plead*: that the love which is in the Father may once again be revealed *at this stage of history* and that, through the work of The Son and The Holy Spirit, that love may be shown to be present in our modern world and be shown to be more powerful than evil: more powerful than sin and death (*Rich in Mercy*, 15).

Now is the Time for Mercy

Our Lord's revelations to Sister Faustina speak of *now* as the *time of mercy*. There is a special urgency in this message. Repeatedly, our Lord stressed that *now* is the day of mercy before the coming of the day of judgment. *Now* is the time to prepare for the coming of the Lord. "Write this," He said to her:

"Before I come as the just Judge, I am coming first as the King of Mercy... I am prolonging the time of mercy for the sake of [sinners]. But woe to them if they do not recognize this time of My visitation" (Diary, 83, 1160)

To this powerful message from the Lord, Sister Faustina adds her own exhortation. "O human souls," she asks, "where are you going to hide on the day of God's anger? Take refuge *now* in the fount of God's Mercy" (*Diary*, 848)

Of the 6.0 billion people in the world, 18 million are Jewish, 817 million are Muslim, and 1.55 billion are Christian, of which 872 million are Catholics. This leaves some 3.6 billion who do not even know that there is a Merciful God, and many more who are refusing to trust in His mercy.

In the face of this situation, Our Lord's words to us through Sister Faustina are unmistakably clear:

"Speak to the world about My mercy: let all mankind recognize My unfathomable mercy. It is a sign for the end times, after it will come the day of justice. While there is still time, let them have recourse to the fount of My mercy, let them profit from the Blood and Water which gushed forth for them" (Diary, 848).

So, the challenge awaits us now to speak out and tell the world of this infinitely merciful God who is waiting for us to turn to Him with trust and become merciful to others as He is merciful to us.

It is our hope and prayer that this book will be the catalyst for a world-wide response to God's mercy as presented to us through Sister Faustina:

"God's floodgates have been opened for us Let us want to take advantage of them before the day of God's justice arrives... O what a great multitude of souls I see! They worshiped The Divine Mercy and will be singing the hymn of praise for all eternity" (Diary, 1159, 848).

20b.2 Devotion to the Divine Mercy

Our Lord not only taught Blessed Faustina the fundamentals of trust, and of mercy to others, but He also revealed special ways to live out the response to His mercy. These we call the *devotion to The Divine Mercy*. The word "devotion" means fulfilling our vows. It is a commitment of our lives to the Lord who is Mercy itself.

By giving our lives to The Divine Mercy — Jesus Christ Himself — we become instruments of His mercy to others, and so we can live out the command of the Lord:

"Be merciful even as your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36).

Through Blessed Faustina, Our Lord gave us special means of drawing on His mercy: an Image of The Divine Mercy, a Chaplet of Divine Mercy, a Feast of Mercy, a novena, and prayer at the three o'clock hour — the hour of His death.

These special means are in addition to the Sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation, which have been given to the Church.

20c. The Image of The Divine Mercy

Jesus appeared to Blessed Faustina with rays of red and pale light streaming from the area around His heart. His right hand was raised in blessing, recalling the scene of Easter Sunday night (see Jn 20:19-23).

He asked Blessed Faustina to have this vision painted along with the words, “*Jesus, I trust in You!*” (*Diary*, 47, 48, 49).

He presented this image to remind people to trust in His mercy, and to come to Him for mercy:

“I am offering people a vessel with which they are to keep coming for graces to the fountain of mercy. That vessel is this image with the signature: ‘Jesus, I trust in you.’” (*Diary*, 327)

Jesus explained that the rays represented the blood and water which flowed from His pierced side, and He taught Blessed Faustina the prayer:

“O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fountain of mercy for us, I trust in You” (*Diary*, 84).

20d. Entrustment Prayer

Jesus, I trust in You.

Pope John Paul II entrusts himself with this short powerful prayer that our Lord taught St. Faustina (cf. Homily at Shrine of Divine Mercy, Krakow, June 7, 1997. See section 20j.2).

Pope John Paul II entrusted the whole world to the Divine Mercy during his visit to the Shrine in Krakow on August 17, 2002 (see text of homily in section 20j.4).

20e. Divine Mercy Sunday

What is Divine Mercy Sunday?

Divine Mercy Sunday is now the title of the Second Sunday of the Easter season. It was named by Pope John Paul II at the canonization of St. Maria Faustina on April 30, 2000, and then officially decreed by the Vatican.

Pope John Paul II described Mercy Sunday: “In a special way, it is the *Sunday of thanksgiving* for all goodness that God has shown us in the whole Easter mystery” (April 23, 1995). Here, he is underscoring the Church’s understanding that Divine Mercy Sunday as the Octave Day of Easter brings us the fullness of Christ’s Resurrection— pointing back to the first day of our celebration on Easter Sunday, and now to its fullness on the eighth day, the Octave.

Divine Mercy Sunday, then, can be seen as the convergence of all the mysteries and graces of Holy Week and Easter Week. It is like a multi-exposure photograph of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and Easter Week. Or we can think of it as a converging lens that focuses the light of the Risen Christ into a radiant beam of merciful love and grace for the whole world. It combines both the first and eighth days of Easter, celebrating the great graces that are available to us through our Risen Lord’s victory over sin, death, and the Evil One.

In fact, Our Lord revealed various revelations about His mercy to St. Faustina (whom you will learn more about later), including the flood of mercy which is available on this day “for all souls, especially for poor sinners”:

“On one occasion, I heard these words: My daughter, tell the whole world about My inconceivable mercy. I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and a shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the Fount of My mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day all the divine floodgates through which graces 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. Everything that exists has come forth from the very depths of My most tender mercy. Every soul in its relation to Me will contemplate My love and mercy throughout 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” (Diary, 699).

Why do we need Divine Mercy Sunday?

Your sins and my sins are the short answer! Mercy Sunday brings us Our Lord’s Promise of an “ocean of graces” for souls, “especially for poor sinners.” And each one of us, as a sinner, sorely needs these graces of the Risen Christ to wash away the misery of our sins. Even those of us who are striving for holiness need deeper conversion and renewal.

Look at it this way: sin is the problem; Divine Mercy is the answer; and now we have a special day on which to receive that mercy in great abundance. We would be foolish not to avail ourselves of God’s generous offer.

What indulgences are attached to the Divine Mercy Devotions?

The following are excerpts from the Decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary of June 29, 2002, in which the Holy Father attached a plenary and partial indulgence to the devout observance of the Second Sunday of Easter or Divine Mercy Sunday (printed with permission of L’Osservatore Romano.)

Plenary indulgence — To ensure that the faithful would observe this day with intense devotion, the Supreme Pontiff himself established that this Sunday be enriched by a plenary indulgence, as will be explained below, so that the faithful might receive in great abundance the gift of the consolation of the Holy Spirit. In this way, they can foster a growing love for God and for their neighbor, and after they have obtained God’s pardon, they in turn might be persuaded to show a prompt pardon to their brothers and sisters.

Three conditions for the Plenary Indulgence — And so the Supreme Pontiff, motivated by an ardent desire to foster in Christians this devotion to Divine Mercy, as much as possible in the hope of offering great spiritual fruit to the faithful, in the Audience granted on 13 June 2002, to those Responsible for the Apostolic Penitentiary, granted the following Indulgences:

A plenary indulgence, granted under the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer for the intentions of Supreme Pontiff) to the faithful who, on the Sunday of Easter or Divine Mercy Sunday, in any church or chapel, in a spirit that is completely detached from the affection for a sin, even a venial sin, take part in the prayers and devotions held in honour of Divine Mercy, or who, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed or reserved in the tabernacle, recite the Our Father and the Creed, adding a devout prayer to the merciful Lord Jesus (e.g. Merciful Jesus, I trust in you”);

A **partial indulgence**, granted to the faithful who at least with a contrite heart, pray to the merciful Lord Jesus a legitimately approved invocation.

20e.1 Preparation

In preparation for the Feast of The Divine Mercy, the Lord asked Blessed Faustina to make a novena of prayer from Good Friday to the following Saturday. These nine days of prayer (the word “novena” means nine) before the Feast of Mercy are like the nine days of prayer in the upper room before the day of Pentecost (see Acts 1:14).

For each of the nine days, our Lord gave Blessed Faustina a different intention: all mankind, especially sinners; the souls of priests and religious; all devout and faithful souls; those who do not believe in God and those who do not yet know Jesus; the souls of those who have separated themselves from the Church; the meek and humble souls and the souls of little children; the souls who especially venerate and glorify His mercy; the souls detained in purgatory; and souls who have become lukewarm.

20e.2 Divine Mercy Novena

"I desire that during these nine days you bring souls to the fountain of My mercy, that they may draw there from strength and refreshment and whatever grace they have need of in the hardships of life, and especially at the hour of death. On each day you will bring to My Heart a different group of souls, and you will immerse them in this ocean of My mercy, and I will bring all these souls into the house of My Father... On each day you will beg My Father, on the strength of My bitter Passion, for graces for these souls" (Diary, 1209).

[For the Divine Mercy novena videotapes, ask for Resource #133-310VK. Also see page ???, Resource #133-410VK.]

FIRST DAY_(Good Friday)

"Today bring to Me all mankind, especially all sinners, and immerse them in the ocean of My mercy. In this way you will console Me in the bitter grief into which the loss of souls plunges Me."

Most Merciful Jesus, whose very nature it is to have compassion on us and to forgive us, do not look upon our sins but upon our trust which we place in Your infinite goodness. Receive us all into the abode of Your Most Compassionate Heart, and never let us escape from It. We beg this of You by Your love which unites You to the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Eternal Father, turn Your merciful gaze upon all mankind and especially upon poor sinners, all enfolded in the Most Compassionate Heart of Jesus. For the sake of His sorrowful Passion show us Your mercy, that we may praise the omnipotence of Your mercy forever and ever. Amen.

[Pray the *Chaplet of Divine Mercy*, see section 20f.]

SECOND DAY_(Holy Saturday)

"Today bring to Me the souls of priests and religious, and immerse them in My unfathomable mercy. It was they who gave Me the strength to endure My bitter Passion. Through them as through channels My mercy flows out upon mankind."

Most Merciful Jesus, from whom comes all that is good, increase Your grace in men and women consecrated to Your service, that they may perform worthy works of mercy; and that all who see them may glorify the Father of Mercy who is in heaven.

Eternal Father, turn Your merciful gaze upon the company of chosen ones in Your vineyard — upon the souls of priests and religious; and endow them with the strength of Your blessing. For the love of the Heart of Your Son in which they are enfolded, impart to them Your power and light, that they may be able to guide others in the way of salvation and with one voice sing praise to Your boundless mercy for ages without end. Amen.

[Pray the *Chaplet of Divine Mercy*, see section 20f.]

THIRD DAY_(Easter Sunday)

Today bring to Me all devout and faithful souls, and immerse them in the ocean of My mercy. These souls brought Me consolation on the Way Of the Cross. They were that drop of consolation in the midst of an ocean of bitterness."

Most Merciful Jesus, from the treasury of Your mercy, You impart Your graces in great abundance to each and all. Receive us into the abode of Your Most Compassionate Heart and never let us escape from It. We beg this grace of You by that most wondrous love for the heavenly Father with which Your Heart burns so fiercely.

Eternal Father, turn Your merciful gaze upon faithful souls, as upon the inheritance of Your Son. For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, grant them Your blessing and surround them with Your constant protection. Thus may they never fail in love or lose the treasure of the holy faith, but rather, with all the hosts of Angels and Saints, may they glorify Your boundless mercy for endless ages. Amen.

[Pray the *Chaplet of Divine Mercy*, see section 20f.]

FOURTH DAY_(Monday after Easter)

“Today bring to Me those who do not believe in God and those who do not yet know me. I was thinking also of them during My bitter Passion, and their future zeal comforted My Heart. Immerse them in the ocean of My mercy-”

Most compassionate Jesus, You are the Light of the whole world. Receive into the abode of Your Most Compassionate Heart the souls of those who do not believe in God and of those who as yet do not know You. Let the rays of Your grace enlighten them that they, too, together with us, may extol Your wonderful mercy; and do not let them escape from the abode which is Your Most Compassionate Heart.

Eternal Father, turn Your merciful gaze upon the souls of those who do not believe in you and of those who as yet do not know You, but who are enclosed in the Most Compassionate Heart of Jesus. Draw them to the light of the Gospel. These souls do not know what great happiness it is to love You. Grant that they, too, may extol the generosity of Your mercy for endless ages. Amen.

[Pray the *Chaplet of Divine Mercy*, see section 20f.]

FIFTH DAY_(Tuesday after Easter)

“Today bring to Me the souls of those who have separated themselves from My Church, and immerse them in the ocean of My mercy. During My bitter Passion they tore at My Body and Heart, that is, My Church. As they return to unity with the Church My wounds heal and in this way they alleviate My Passion.”

Most Merciful Jesus, Goodness Itself, You do not refuse light to those who seek it of You. Receive into the abode of Your Most Compassionate Heart the souls of those who have separated themselves from Your Church. Draw them by Your light into the unity of the Church, and do not let them escape from the abode of Your Most Compassionate Heart; but bring it about that they, too, come to glorify the generosity of Your mercy.

Eternal Father, turn Your merciful gaze upon the souls of those who have separated themselves from Your Son's Church, who have squandered Your blessings and misused Your graces by obstinately persisting in their errors. Do not look upon their errors, but upon the love of Your own Son and upon His bitter Passion, which He underwent for their sake, since they, too, are enclosed in His Most Compassionate Heart. Bring it about that they also may glorify Your great mercy for endless ages. Amen.

[Pray the *Chaplet of Divine Mercy*, see section 20f.]

SIXTH DAY_(Wednesday after Easter)

“Today bring to Me the meek and humble souls and the souls of little children, and immerse them in My mercy. These souls most closely resemble My Heart. They strengthened Me during My bitter agony. I saw them as earthly Angels, who will keep vigil at My altars. I pour out upon them whole torrents of grace. Only the humble soul is capable of receiving My grace. I favor humble souls with my confidence.”

Most Merciful Jesus, You yourself have said, "Learn from Me for I am meek and humble of heart." Receive into the abode of Your Most Compassionate Heart all meek and humble souls and the souls of little children. These souls send all heaven into ecstasy and they are the heavenly Father's favorites. They are a sweet-smelling bouquet before the throne of God; God Himself takes delight in their fragrance. These souls have a permanent abode in Your Most Compassionate Heart, O Jesus, and they unceasingly sing out a hymn of love and mercy.

Eternal Father, turn Your merciful gaze upon meek souls, upon humble souls, and upon little children who are enfolded in the abode which is the Most Compassionate Heart of Jesus. These souls bear the closest resemblance to Your Son. Their fragrance rises from the earth and reaches Your very throne. Father of mercy and of all goodness, I beg You by the love You bear these souls and by the delight You take in them: Bless the whole world, that all souls together may sing out the praises of Your mercy for endless ages. Amen.

[Pray the *Chaplet of Divine Mercy*, see section 20f.]

SEVENTH DAY_(Thursday after Easter)

"Today bring to Me the souls who especially venerate and glorify My mercy, and immerse them in My mercy. These souls sorrowed most over my Passion and entered most deeply into My spirit. They are living images of My Compassionate Heart. These souls will shine with a special brightness in the next life. Not one of them will go into the fire of hell. I shall particularly defend each one of them at the hour of death."

Most Merciful Jesus, whose Heart is Love Itself, receive into the abode of Your Most Compassionate Heart the souls of those who particularly extol and venerate the greatness of Your mercy. These souls are mighty with the very power of God Himself. In the midst of all afflictions and adversities they go forward, confident of Your mercy; and united to You, O Jesus, they carry all mankind on their shoulders. These souls will not be judged severely, but Your mercy will embrace them as they depart from this life.

Eternal Father, turn Your merciful gaze upon the souls who glorify and venerate Your greatest attribute, that of Your fathomless mercy, and who are enclosed in the Most Compassionate Heart of Jesus. These souls are a living Gospel; their hands are full of deeds of mercy, and their hearts, overflowing with joy, sing a canticle of mercy to You, O Most High! I beg You O God: Show them Your mercy according to the hope and trust they have placed in You. Let there be accomplished in them the promise of Jesus, who said to them that during their life, but especially at the hour of death, the souls who will venerate this fathomless mercy of His, He, Himself, will defend as His glory. Amen.

[Pray the *Chaplet of Divine Mercy*, see section 20f.]

EIGHTH DAY_(Friday after Easter)

"Today bring to Me the souls who are detained in Purgatory, and immerse them in the abyss of My mercy. Let the torrents of My Blood cool down their scorching flames. All these souls are greatly loved by Me. They are making retribution to My justice. It is in your power to bring them relief. Draw all the indulgences from the treasury of My Church and offer them on their behalf. Oh, if you only knew the torments they suffer, you would continually offer for them the alms of the spirit and pay off their debt to My justice."

Most Merciful Jesus, You Yourself have said that You desire mercy; so I bring into the abode of Your Most Compassionate Heart the souls in Purgatory, souls who are very dear to You, and yet, who must make retribution to Your justice. May the streams of Blood and Water which gushed forth from Your Heart put out the flames of Purgatory, that there, too, the power of Your mercy may be celebrated.

Eternal Father, turn Your merciful gaze upon the souls suffering in Purgatory, who are enfolded in the Most Compassionate Heart of Jesus. I beg You, by the sorrowful Passion of Jesus Your Son, and by all the bitterness with which His most sacred Soul was flooded: Manifest Your mercy to the souls who are under Your just scrutiny. Look upon them in no other way but only through the Wounds of Jesus, Your dearly beloved Son; for we firmly believe that there is no limit to Your goodness and compassion. Amen.

[Pray the *Chaplet of Divine Mercy*, see section 20f.]

NINTH DAY_(Saturday after Easter)

“Today bring to Me souls who have become lukewarm, and immerse them in the abyss of My mercy. These souls wound My Heart most painfully. My soul suffered the most dreadful loathing in the Garden of Olives because of lukewarm souls. They were the reason I cried out: ‘Father, take this cup away from Me, if it be Your will.’ For them the last hope of salvation is to run to My mercy.”

Most compassionate Jesus, You are Compassion Itself. I bring lukewarm souls into the abode of Your Most Compassionate Heart. In this fire of Your pure love let these tepid souls, who, like corpses, filled You with such deep loathing, be once again set aflame. O Most Compassionate Jesus, exercise the omnipotence of Your mercy and draw them into the very ardor of Your love, and bestow upon them the gift of holy love, for nothing is beyond Your power.

Eternal Father, turn Your merciful gaze upon lukewarm souls who are nonetheless enfolded in the Most Compassionate Heart of Jesus. Father of Mercy, I beg You by the bitter Passion of Your Son and by His three-hour agony on the Cross: Let them, too, glorify the abyss of Your mercy. Amen.

[Pray the *Chaplet of Divine Mercy*, see section 20f.]

20e.3 How is Mercy Sunday _celebrated?

Mercy is celebrated by the Holy Mass of the Second Sunday of Easter (the Octave day) with preaching on the Mercy of God and receiving Holy Communion. The Image of the Merciful Savior is venerated and some work of mercy is done. The feast is prepared for by all of Lent, a good confession before that day in order to receive Holy Communion worthily and by a novena of Chaplets of the Divine Mercy (the intentions St. Faustina used are recommended).

[To help you celebrate the feast of Divine Mercy, see the “Day of Grace” program on page ???.]

20e.4 Reconciliation: _Tribunal of Mercy

(From Now is the Time for Mercy)

Since we are weak human beings and we do sin (“even the just man falls seven times a day and rises again” [Prov. 24:16]), the Lord has provided a Sacrament of Mercy through which He forgives us and heals us when we fall and are wounded. He spoke repeatedly to Sister Faustina about using the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a “Tribunal of Mercy,” wherein we receive a judgment, not of condemnation, but of love.

“Tell souls where they are to look for solace; that is, in the Tribunal of Mercy. There the greatest miracles take place (and) are incessantly repeated” (Diary, 1448).

Our Lord made it clear to her that we don’t have to make great pilgrimages or involve ourselves in other external ceremonies in order to receive these miracles of His mercy and forgiveness.

“...it suffices to come with faith to the feet of My representative and to reveal to him one’s misery, and the miracle of Divine Mercy will be fully demonstrated” (Diary, 1448).

The Sacrament of Reconciliation became a regular and important part of her life, and she grew in her understanding of it. She learned that Confession is much more than just asking and receiving forgiveness. “We should desire two kinds of profit from Holy Confession,” she explained:

1. We come to Confession to be healed;
2. We come to be educated — like a small child, our soul has constant need of education (*Diary*, 377).

She realized that this need of our souls for education — through the grace of God and through the guidance of the confessor — is vital to our spiritual growth. We cannot simply rely on ourselves:

“...on its own strength, the soul will not go far; it will exert itself greatly and will do nothing for the glory of God; it will err continually, because our mind is darkened and does not know how to discern its own affairs” (*Diary*, 377).

Another important lesson Sister learned was to pray for her confessor:

“...I came to understand one thing: that I must pray much for each of my confessors, that he might obtain the light of the Holy Spirit, for when I approach the confessional without first praying fervently, the confessor does not understand me very well. Father encouraged me to pray fervently for these intentions, that God would give better knowledge and understanding of the things He is asking of me” (*Diary*, 647).

Through Sister Faustina, Christ Himself instructs us how to prepare for the reception of the sacrament:

“...when you go to confession, to this fountain of My mercy, the Blood and Water which came forth from My Heart always flows down upon your soul and ennobles it. Every time you go to confession, immerse yourself entirely in My mercy, with great trust, so that I may pour the bounty of My grace upon your soul” (*Diary*, 1602).

Repeatedly, He emphasizes that the confessional is the place of the greatest mercy, and that it is He, Himself, Mercy Incarnate, who waits for us there:

“When you approach the confessional, know this, that I Myself am waiting there for you. I am only hidden by the priest, but I Myself act in your soul. Here the misery of the soul meets the God of Mercy” (*Diary*, 1602)

“My daughter, just as you prepare in My presence, so also you make your confession before Me. The person of the priest is, for Me, only a screen. Never analyze what sort of a priest it is that I am making use of, open your soul in confession as you would to Me, and I will fill it with My light” (*Diary*, 1725).

He stresses, too, that no matter how great our sin, His mercy is greater and can restore us to His grace:

“Were a soul like a decaying corpse so that from a human standpoint, there would be no [hope of] restoration and everything would already be lost, it is not so with God. The miracle of Divine Mercy restores that soul in full” (*Diary*, 1448).

Our sinfulness, then, cannot keep us from receiving His Mercy. Only our fear and refusal to trust in Him can block His love. So Our Lord urges Sister Faustina:

“Pray for souls that they be not afraid to approach the tribunal of My Mercy. Do not grow weary of praying for sinners...Tell souls that from this fount of mercy souls draw graces solely with the vessel of trust. If their trust is great, there is no limit to My generosity” (*Diary*, 975, 1602).

The Church, likewise, continues to exhort us to make frequent use of this Sacrament of Reconciliation, even monthly, to draw on this infinite fount of mercy. John Paul II has a special concern that we make use of the Sacrament and be healed of one of the great sins of our age — the loss of the sense of sin.

Our Lord emphasized the importance of the sacrament by making its reception one of the conditions for celebrating the Feast of Mercy:

“On that day, the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment” (Diary, 699).

The Sacrament of Reconciliation in which we confess our sins is truly a place of receiving God’s Mercy — it really is a “Tribunal of Mercy”.

20e.5 The Holy Eucharist: The Presence of Mercy

(From Now is the Time for Mercy)

“All the good that is in me is due to Holy Communion. I owe everything to it. I feel that this holy fire has transformed me completely. Oh, how happy I am to be a dwelling place for You, O Lord! My heart is a temple in which You dwell continually” (Diary, 1392).

The Holy Eucharist is central to devotion to The Divine Mercy, so much so that Our Lord specifically asks, through Sister Faustina, that we all receive Communion on the Feast of The Divine Mercy, after preparing for it through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In the Eucharist, Jesus (Mercy Incarnate) is present Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity. The Eucharist is God’s sacrificial gift of mercy, offered in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world; and in receiving it in Holy Communion, we are strengthened and consoled by the Lord Who is Mercy itself.

Pope John Paul II speaks of these three aspects of the Eucharist — presence, sacrifice, and communion — as essential to our understanding of our faith (cf. *Redeemer of Man*). The presence of The Lord calls for our adoration, the sacrifice calls for our offering of ourselves with Christ, and Communion calls us to live in union with Him.

Through her life and writings, Sister Faustina gives us a perfect model for responding to this threefold call of Jesus in the Eucharist; the Eucharist was so central to her life that she referred to it in some way on most of the pages of her diary and wrote sixteen beautiful prayers of preparation for Holy Communion (*Diary*, 1804-1824).

Adoration

Sister Faustina’s adoration of the Eucharist began with the recognition of the great mystery of the Mass itself, and she urges us to special reverence and participation:

“Oh, what awesome mysteries take place during Mass! A great mystery is accomplished in the Holy Mass. With what great devotion should we listen to and take part in this death of Jesus. One day we will know what God is doing for us in each Mass, and what sort of gift He is preparing in it for us. Only His divine love could permit that such a gift be provided for us” (Diary, 914).

During her working day, Sister Faustina used every free moment to stop before the Blessed Sacrament and visit the Lord. She also spent special hours of adoration interceding for other people, especially those lost in sin.

These hours spent in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament resulted in a special Litany of Adoration of the Eucharist, which she wrote in 1935, emphasizing the Eucharist as the Mystery of Mercy (*Diary*, 356).

Offering

One year, on Holy Thursday, Sister Faustina saw, in a vision, the institution of the Eucharist in the cenacle and was given to understand that in the offering that Jesus made of Himself on the night before He died, the sacrifice was fully consummated:

“...I was most deeply moved when, before the Consecration, Jesus raised His eyes to heaven and entered into a mysterious conversation with His Father. It is only in eternity that we shall really understand that moment ... At the moment of Consecration, love rested satiated — the sacrifice fully consummated. Now only the external ceremony of death will be carried out — external destruction; the essence [of it] is in the Cenacle” (Diary, 684).

This means then, that the Eucharistic offering is the essence of the sacrifice of Jesus. In every Mass, united with the priest, we offer the very Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, made present on the altar by the words and actions of the priest through the power of The Holy Spirit. We unite the offering of ourselves with His offering, which is already accepted by the Father, and is made present to us here and now.

During Exposition of The Blessed Sacrament and during Mass itself, Sister Faustina regularly saw Our Lord. Most often she saw Him as a child; but at times, He appeared with rays of light as in the Image of The Divine Mercy; and at other times, she saw Him in His Passion and was able to participate in it with Him, sharing His pain.

“Today, from early morning, Divine absorption penetrates my soul. During Mass, I thought I would see the little Jesus, as I often do; however, today during Holy Mass I saw the Crucified Jesus. Jesus was nailed to the cross and was in great agony. His suffering pierced me, soul and body, in a manner which was invisible, but nevertheless most painful” (Diary, 913).

Union

Uniting herself to Jesus through the regular reception of Communion, Sister Faustina learned to draw all her strength and consolation from the Eucharist, a lesson that is important for us to learn as well.

“...One thing alone sustains me, and that is Holy Communion. From it I draw my strength; in it is all my comfort...Jesus concealed in the Host is everything to me. From the tabernacle I draw strength, power, courage and light. Here, I seek consolation in time of anguish. I would not know how to give glory to God if I did not have the Eucharist in my heart” (Diary, 1037).

As the battle of each day began, she found renewed confidence and strength in the Eucharist.

“Every morning during meditation, I prepare myself for the whole day's struggle. Holy Communion assures me that I will win the victory; and so it is...This Bread of the Strong gives me all the strength I need to carry on my mission and the courage to do whatever the Lord asks of me. The courage and strength that are in me are not of me, but of Him who lives in me — it is the Eucharist” (Diary, 91).

She learned, too, that the Lord continued to live in her — continued to be present in her, as in a tabernacle, until her next reception of the Holy Eucharist in Holy Communion.

“Today, I have come to understand many of God's mysteries. I have come to know that Holy Communion remains in me until the next Holy Communion. A vivid and clearly felt presence of God continues in my soul. The awareness of this plunges me into deep recollection, without the slightest effort on my part. My heart is a living tabernacle in which the living Host is reserved. I have never sought God in some far off place, but within myself. It is in the depths of my own being that I commune with my God” (Diary, 1302).

On more than one occasion, the Lord shared with her how closely He wants to unite Himself with us through the Eucharist, if only we would recognize His presence.

“...My great delight is to unite Myself with souls...when I come to a human heart in Holy Communion, My hands are full of all kinds of graces which I want to give to the soul. But souls do not even pay any attention to Me; they leave Me to Myself and busy themselves with other things. Oh, how sad I am that souls do not recognize Love! They treat Me as a dead object” (Diary, 1385).

Sister Faustina's recognition of the reality of Christ's presence in the Eucharist and her unconditional "yes" to His call for sacrifice and unity should be an inspiration to us all to reexamine our own response to this great sacrament, in which the Lord of mercy pours Himself into our hearts:

"I often feel God's presence after Holy Communion in a special and tangible way. I know God is in my heart. And the fact that I feel Him in my heart does not interfere with my duties. Even when I am dealing with very important matters which require attention, I do not lose the presence of God in my soul, and I am closely united with Him. With Him, I go to work, with Him I go for recreation, with Him I suffer, with Him I rejoice; I live in Him and He in me. I am never alone, because He is my constant companion. He is present to me at every moment" (Diary, 318).

"Oh, how painful it is to Me that souls so seldom unite themselves to Me in Holy Communion. I wait for souls, and they are indifferent toward Me. I love them tenderly and sincerely, and they distrust Me. I want to lavish My graces on them, and they do not want to accept them. They treat Me as a dead object, whereas My Heart is full of love and mercy" (Diary, 1447).

20f. The Chaplet of Divine Mercy

Our Lord taught Blessed Faustina a prayer for mercy that she was to pray "unceasingly": The Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

He told her that, if she prayed in this way, her prayers would have great power for the conversion of sinners, for peace for the dying, and even for controlling nature.

We, too, can pray this chaplet, using ordinary rosary beads of five decades.

Begin with the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Apostles Creed.

Then, on the large beads pray:

Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your Dearly Beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

On the small beads pray:

For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

At the end, pray three times:

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world (*Diary*, 476).

[For the Chaplet of Divine Mercy on audio or video, see page ???.]

20g. The Three O'Clock Hour _of Great Mercy

In His revelations to St. Faustina, Jesus asked for special, daily remembrance at three o'clock, the very hour He died for us on the cross:

"At three o'clock, implore My mercy, especially for sinners; and if only for a brief moment, immerse yourself in My Passion, particularly in My abandonment at the moment of agony; This is the hour of great mercy for the whole world. I will allow you to enter into My mortal sorrow. In this hour, I will refuse nothing to the soul that makes a request of Me in virtue of My Passion" (Diary, 1320).

"As often as you hear the clock strike the third hour, immerse yourself completely in My mercy, adoring and glorifying it; invoke its omnipotence for the whole world, and particularly for poor sinners; for at that moment mercy was opened wide for every soul. In this hour you can obtain everything for yourself and for others for the asking; it was the hour of grace for the whole world — mercy triumphed over justice...

“Try your best to make the Stations of the Cross in this hour, provided that your duties permit it; and if you are not able to make the Stations of the Cross, then at least step into the chapel for a moment and adore, in the Most Blessed Sacrament, My Heart, which is full of mercy; and should you be unable to step into chapel, immerse yourself in prayer there where you happen to be, if only for a very brief instant” (Diary, 1572).

At 3:00 o'clock we can pray one of the following:

- *“You expired, Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world. O Fountain of Life, unfathomable Divine Mercy, envelop the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us” (Diary, 1319).*
- *“O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fountain of Mercy for us, I trust in You” (Diary, 84).*
- The Chaplet of The Divine Mercy (see 20f).

We may not all be able to make the Stations or adore Him in the Blessed Sacrament, but we can all mentally pause for a “brief instant,” think of His total abandonment at the hour of agony, and say a short prayer such as “Jesus, Mercy,” or “Jesus, for the sake of Your Sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.”

20h. Proclaiming Mercy Prepares _for His Coming Again

He will come again to judge the living and the dead (Apostles' Creed).

Each year during the season of Advent, the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours gradually increase the Church's cry and yearning: “Come, Lord Jesus!” Over and over again we are admonished to “be prepared; get ready; He is near!”

Some hard facts must be considered in this matter of the coming of The Lord. We have too easily interpreted away the fact of His coming, and we live as though it had no reality. We need to accept, in a real way, that Jesus Christ is coming again. This is a fact of our faith. We profess it in the Creed at Mass (Nicene Creed), we proclaim it in every Eucharist, and we pray for it in every Our Father — “Your kingdom come!”

We need to live as though He were coming immediately, and we need to prepare ourselves by watching, waiting, and praying. This is the gospel teaching (cf Mt 24; Mk 13; Lk 21).

When He is coming we do not know — that knowledge is reserved for the Father — but we do know that He will come in glory upon the clouds, and we must be ready to greet Him at whatever hour He comes. We may wonder why The Lord is slow in coming, but there are clear indications in the sacred scriptures (cf 2 Thes 2; 1 Cor 15:25; 2 Pet 3:8-13) that the delay is due to us — not the Lord.

The Lord specifically told Sister Faustina that He is waiting for us:

“...I am prolonging the time of mercy for the sake of [sinners]. But woe to them if they do not recognize this time of My visitation” (Diary, 1160).

We can hasten the day of the coming of the Lord by leading holy lives, by being merciful, and by standing firm against Satan. The Lord is waiting for us to do just that. He wants to show mercy on us all since He wants none to perish, but wants all to come to repentance. He wants, generation after generation, to show His mercy (cf 1 Pet 5:6-11; 2 Pet 3:9, 11-13; Rom 11:32).

Through Sister Faustina, Our Lord promised a sign before His coming as the just Judge — a sign that recalls the promise of scripture (cf Lk 21:25; Mt 24:29; Mk 13:24):

“Write this: Before I come as the just Judge, I am coming first as the King of Mercy. Before the day of justice arrives, there will be given to people a sign in the heavens ... All light in the heavens will be extinguished, and there will be great darkness over the whole earth. Then the sign of the cross will be seen in the sky, and from the openings where the hands and the feet of the Savior were nailed will come forth great lights which will light up the earth for a period of time. This will take place shortly before the last day” (Diary, 83).

But a more general sign of His coming is His mercy itself.

“...Speak to the world about My mercy; let all mankind recognize My unfathomable mercy. It is a sign for the end of times; after it will come the day of justice” (Diary, 848).

The times we live in are a time to turn to the mercy of God. This is the day of mercy before His coming as Judge of justice. Now is the time to turn to His mercy so that He might crush the head of Satan, purify us from our sins and place death itself beneath His feet. Now is the time to proclaim God’s mercy.

The call of Sister Faustina to a mission of proclaiming God’s mercy is a very special one for our times:

“Today I heard the words: In the Old Covenant I sent prophets wielding thunderbolts to My people. Today I am sending you with My mercy to the people of the whole world. I do not want to punish aching mankind, but I desire to heal it, pressing it to My merciful Heart. I use punishment when they themselves force Me to do so; My hand is reluctant to take hold of the sword of justice. Before the Day of Justice, I am sending the Day of Mercy” (Diary, 1588).

On a number of occasions, Our Lady appeared to Sister Faustina with revelations that echo the urgency of those of La Salette, Lourdes, and Fatima. One special appearance stands out. On the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25, 1936, Our Lady said to Sister Faustina:

“I gave the Savior to the world; as for you, you have to speak to the world of His great mercy and prepare the world for the Second Coming of Him who will come, not as a merciful Savior, but as a just Judge. Oh, how terrible is that day! Determined is the day of justice, the day of divine wrath. The angels tremble before it. Speak to souls about this great mercy while it is still time for [granting] mercy. If you keep silent now, you will be answering for a great number of souls on that terrible day” (Diary, 635).

This ties in with the preaching and writings of Pope John Paul II. In his first Encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*, and again in his Encyclical, *Dominum et Vivificantem*, he refers to the year 2001 as the “new Advent.” He asks:

“What should we do in order that this new Advent of the Church connected with the approaching end of the second millenium may bring us closer to him whom Sacred Scripture calls “Everlasting Father?” It is certain that the Church of the new Advent, the Church that is continually preparing for the new coming of the Lord, must be the Church of the Eucharist and of Penance.”

The Holy Father seems to have a mystic sense about the new Advent and the beginning of the third millenium as a time of Eucharist and mercy!

We can think of the third millenium in light of what St. Peter said: “In the Lord’s eyes, one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years are as one day” (2 Pet 3:8). It would mean that we are but entering the “third day,” which is the day of resurrection for the Church now in travail, the day of the glorious reign of the Lord with His purified Church!

Jesus is waiting for us to be merciful, even as our Father is merciful (cf. Lk 6:36). Like Sister Faustina we, too, are to proclaim God’s mercy — by word and action:

“Souls who spread the honor of My mercy I shield through their entire life as a tender mother her infant, and at the hour of death I will not be a judge for them, but the Merciful Savior” (Diary, 1075).

With Sister Faustina, we should encourage priests to proclaim God’s mercy in preparation for the Lord’s coming again:

“Tell My priests that hardened sinners will repent on hearing their words, when they will speak about My unfathomable mercy, about the compassion I have for them in My Heart. To priests who proclaim and extol My mercy, I will give wondrous power, I will anoint their words and touch the hearts of those to whom they will speak” (Diary, 1521).

Together, we can proclaim His mercy and hasten the day of His coming.

20.i Selected Prayers from the Diary

The following selection of prayers are the ones gathered in *The Divine Mercy Message and Devotion*, (Code M-17); Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, MA.

Nearly 150 prayers from the *Diary* of St. Faustina were gathered by Colleen Free in a booklet, *Praying with Saint Maria Faustina* (code PWSF), Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, MA.

20i.1 Blessed Faustina's Praises of _The Divine Mercy (948-949)

The Love of God is the flower — Mercy the fruit. Let the doubting soul read these considerations on Divine Mercy and become trusting.

- Divine Mercy, gushing forth from the bosom of the Father, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, greatest attribute of God, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, incomprehensible mystery, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, fountain gushing forth from the mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, unfathomed by any intellect, human or angelic, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, from which wells forth all life and happiness, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, better than the heavens, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, source of miracles and wonders, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, encompassing the whole universe, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, descending to earth in the Person of the Incarnate Word, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy which flowed out from the open wound of the Heart of Jesus, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, enclosed in the Heart of Jesus for us, and especially for sinners, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, unfathomed in the institution of the Sacred Host, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, in the founding of Holy Church, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, I trust in You
- Divine Mercy, in our justification through Jesus Christ, I trust in You
- Divine Mercy, accompanying us through our whole life, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, embracing us especially at the hour of death, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, endowing us with immortal life, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, accompanying us at every moment of our life, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, shielding us from the fire of hell, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, in the conversion of hardened sinners, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, astonishment for Angels, incomprehensible to Saints, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, unfathomed in all the mysteries of God, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, lifting us out of every misery, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, source of our happiness and joy, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy; in calling us forth from nothingness to existence, I trust in You
- Divine Mercy, embracing all the works of His hands, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, crown of all of God's handiwork, I trust in You
- Divine Mercy, in which we are all immersed, I trust in You
- Divine Mercy, sweet relief for anguished hearts, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, only hope of despairing souls, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy; repose of hearts, peace amidst fear, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, delight and ecstasy of holy souls, I trust in You.
- Divine Mercy, inspiring hope against all hope, I trust in You,

Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of compassion inexhaustible, look kindly upon us and increase Your mercy in us, that in difficult moments we might not despair nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to Your holy will, which is Love and Mercy itself (950).

20i.2 At the Feet of Christ _in the Eucharist

Oh Jesus, Divine Prisoner of Love, when I consider Your love and how You emptied Yourself for me, my senses fail me. You hide Your inconceivable majesty and lower Yourself to miserable me. O King of Glory, though You hide Your beauty, yet the eye of my soul rends the veil. I see the angelic choirs giving You honor without cease, and all the heavenly Powers praising You without cease, and without cease they are saying: Holy, Holy, Holy.

Oh, who will comprehend Your love and Your unfathomable mercy toward us! O Prisoner of Love, I lock up my poor heart in this tabernacle that it may adore You without cease night and day. I know of no obstacle in this adoration, and even though I be physically distant, my heart is always with You. Nothing can put a stop to my love for You. No obstacles exist for me (80)...

O Holy Trinity, One and Indivisible God, may You be blessed for this great gift and testament of mercy (81) ...

I adore You, Lord and Creator, hidden in the Blessed Sacrament. I adore You for all the works of Your hands, that reveal to me so much wisdom, goodness and mercy, O Lord. You have spread so much beauty over the earth, and it tells me about Your beauty, even though these beautiful things are but a faint reflection of You, Incomprehensible Beauty. And although You have hidden Yourself and concealed Your beauty, my eye, enlightened by faith, reaches You, and my soul recognizes its Creator, its Highest Good; and my heart is completely immersed in prayer of adoration (1692).

My Lord and Creator, Your goodness encourages me to converse with You. Your mercy causes the chasm which separates the Creator from the creature to disappear. To converse with You, O Lord, is the delight of my heart. In You I find everything that my heart could desire. Here Your light illumines my mind, enabling it to know You more and more deeply. Here streams of graces flow down upon my heart. Here my soul draws eternal life. O my Lord and Creator, You alone, beyond all these gifts, give Your own self to me and unite Yourself intimately with Your miserable creature (1692).

O Christ, I am most delighted when I see that You are loved, and that Your praise and glory resound, especially the praise of Your mercy. O Christ, to the last moment of my life, I will not stop glorifying Your goodness and mercy. With every drop of my blood, with every beat of my heart, I glorify Your mercy. I long to be entirely transformed into a hymn of Your glory. When I find myself on my deathbed, may the last beat of my heart be a loving hymn in praise of Your unfathomable mercy (1780).

20i.3 In Thanksgiving

O Jesus, eternal God, I thank You for Your countless graces and blessings. Let every beat of my heart be a new hymn of thanksgiving to You, O God. Let every drop of my blood circulate for You, Lord. My soul is one hymn in adoration of Your mercy. I love You, God, for Yourself alone (1794).

20i.4 For Divine Mercy

O Greatly Merciful God, Infinite Goodness, today all mankind calls out from the abyss of its misery to Your mercy — to Your compassion, O God; and it is with its mighty voice of misery that it cries out: Gracious God, do not reject the prayer of this earth's exiles! O Lord, Goodness beyond our understanding, Who are acquainted with our misery through and through, and know that by our own power we cannot ascend to You, we implore You, anticipate us with Your grace and keep on increasing Your mercy in us, that we may faithfully do Your holy will all through our life and at death's hour. Let the omnipotence of Your mercy shield us from the darts of our salvation's enemies, that we may with confidence, as Your children, await Your final coming — that day known to You alone. And we expect to obtain everything promised us by Jesus in spite of all our wretchedness. For Jesus is our Hope: Through His merciful Heart as through an open gate we pass through to heaven (1570).

20i.5 For Priests

O my Jesus, I beg You on behalf of the whole Church: Grant it love and the light of Your Spirit, and give power to the words of priests so that hardened hearts might be brought to repentance and return to You, O Lord.

Lord, give us holy priests; You yourself maintain them in holiness. O Divine and Great High Priest, may the power of Your mercy accompany them everywhere and protect them from the devil's traps and snares which are continually being set for the souls of priests. May the power of Your mercy, O Lord, shatter and bring to naught all that might tarnish the sanctity of priests, for You can do all things (1052) ... I ask You for a special blessing and for light, O Jesus, for the priests before whom I will make my confessions throughout my lifetime (240).

20i.6 For One's Country

Most merciful Jesus, I beseech You through the intercession of Your Saints, and especially the intercession of Your dearest Mother who nurtured You from childhood: bless my native land. I beg You, Jesus, look not on our sins, but on the tears of little children, on the hunger and cold they suffer. Jesus, for the sake of these innocent ones, grant me the grace that I am asking of You for my country (286).

[The moment Blessed Faustina said this prayer she saw Jesus, His eyes filled with tears; and He said to her: "You see, My daughter, what great compassion I have for them. Know that it is they who uphold the world" (286).]

20i.7 To obtain Love for God

Most sweet Jesus, set my love on fire for You and transform me into Yourself. Divinize me that my deeds may be pleasing to You. May this be accomplished by the power of the Holy Communion which I receive daily. Oh how greatly I desire to be wholly transformed into You: O Lord (1289)!

20i.8 To Obtain an Understanding of God

Jesus, give me an intellect, a great intellect, for this only, that I may understand You better; because the better I get to know You, the more ardently will I love You. Jesus, I ask You for a powerful intellect, that I may understand divine and lofty matters. Jesus, give me a keen intellect with which I will get to know Your Divine Essence and Your indwelling, Triune life (1474).

20i.9 Petitions of Trust

O my God, my only hope, I have placed all my trust in You, and I know I shall not be disappointed (317).

I know the full power of Your mercy, and I trust that You will give me everything Your feeble child needs (898).

O Jesus, concealed in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, my only love and mercy, I commend to You all the needs of my body and soul. You can help me, because You are Mercy itself. In You lies all my hope (1751).

20i.10 To the Divine Mercy: _Prayer of Trust

I fly to Your mercy, Compassionate God, who alone are good. Although my misery is great, and my offenses are many, I trust in Your mercy, because You are the God of mercy; and, from time immemorial, it has never been heard of, nor do heaven or earth remember, that a soul trusting in Your mercy has been disappointed.

O God of compassion, You alone can justify me, and You will never reject me when I, contrite, approach Your Merciful Heart, where no one has ever been refused, even if he were the greatest sinner (1730)... [For Your Son assured me:] "Sooner would heaven and earth turn into nothingness than would My mercy fail to embrace a trusting soul" (1777).

Jesus, Friend of a lonely heart, You are my haven, You are my peace. You are my salvation, You are my serenity in moments of struggle and amidst an ocean of doubts. You are the bright ray that lights up the path of my life. You are everything to a lonely soul. You understand the soul even though it remains silent. You know our weaknesses and, like a good physician, You comfort and heal, sparing us sufferings — expert that You are (247).

20i.11 To Be Merciful to Others

O Most Holy Trinity! As many times as I breathe, as many times as my heart beats, as many times as my blood pulsates through my body, so many thousand times do I want to glorify Your mercy.

I want to be completely transformed into Your mercy and to be Your living reflection, O Lord. May the greatest of all divine attributes, that of Your unfathomable mercy, pass through my heart and soul to my neighbor.

Help me, O Lord, that my eyes may be merciful, so that I may never suspect or judge from appearances, but look for what is beautiful in my neighbors' souls and come to their rescue.

Help me, that my ears may be merciful, so that I may give heed to my neighbors' needs and not be indifferent to their pains and moanings.

Help me, O Lord, that my tongue may be merciful, so that I should never speak negatively of my neighbor, but have a word of comfort and forgiveness for all.

Help me, O Lord, that my hands may be merciful and filled with good deeds, so that I may do only good to my neighbors and take upon myself the more difficult and toilsome tasks.

Help me, that my feet may be merciful, so that I may hurry to assist my neighbor, overcoming my own fatigue and weariness. My true rest is in the service of my neighbor.

Help me, O Lord, that my heart may be merciful so that I myself may feel all the sufferings of my neighbor. I will refuse my heart to no one. I will be sincere even with those who, I know, will abuse my kindness. And I will lock myself up in the most merciful Heart of Jesus. I will bear my own suffering in silence. May Your mercy, O Lord, rest upon me.

You Yourself command me to exercise the three degrees of mercy. The first: the act of mercy, of whatever kind. The second: the word of mercy — if I cannot carry out a work of mercy, I will assist by my words. The third: Prayer — if I cannot show mercy by deeds or words, I can always do so by prayer. My prayer reaches out even there where I cannot reach out physically.

O my Jesus, transform me into Yourself, for you can do all things (163).

O Jesus, I understand that Your mercy is beyond all imagining, and therefore I ask You to make my heart so big that there will be room in it for the needs of all the souls living on the face of the earth ... and the souls suffering in Purgatory ... Make my heart sensitive to all the sufferings of my neighbor, whether of body or soul. O my Jesus, I know that You act toward us as we act toward our neighbor ... Make my heart like unto Your merciful Heart (692) ... Transform it into Your own Heart that I may sense the needs of other hearts, especially those who are sad and suffering. May the rays of mercy rest in my heart (514) ... Jesus, help me to go through life doing good to everyone (692).

20i.12 For the Conversion of Sinners

Jesus said to Blessed Faustina:

“You always console Me when you pray for sinners. The prayer most pleasing to Me is the prayer for their conversion. Know, My daughter, that this prayer is always heard and answered” (1397).

On another occasion He told her:

“I desire that you know more profoundly the love that burns in My Heart for souls, and you will understand this when you meditate upon My Passion. Call upon My mercy on behalf of sinners; I desire their salvation. When you say this prayer with a contrite heart and with faith on behalf of some sinner, I will give him the grace of conversion. This is the prayer:

“O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fountain of mercy for us, I trust in You” (186,187).

This promise of Our Lord was specifically made to Blessed Faustina, but if we pray this prayer with the same purity of intention, we have reason to believe God will honor it.

O Jesus, eternal Truth, our Life, I call upon You and I beg Your mercy for poor sinners. O sweetest Heart of my Lord, full of pity and unfathomable mercy, I plead with You for poor sinners. O Most Sacred Heart, Fountain of Mercy from which gush forth rays of inconceivable graces upon the entire human race, I beg of You light for poor sinners. O Jesus, be mindful of Your own bitter Passion and do not permit the loss of souls redeemed at so dear a price of Your most precious Blood. O Jesus, when I consider the great price of Your Blood, I rejoice at its immensity, for one drop alone would have been enough for the salvation of all sinners. Although sin is an abyss of wickedness and ingratitude, the price paid for us can never be equalled. Therefore, let every soul trust in the Passion of the Lord, and place its hope in His mercy. God will not deny His mercy to anyone. Heaven and earth may change, but God's mercy will never be exhausted. Oh, what immense joy burns in my heart when I contemplate Your incomprehensible goodness, O Jesus! I desire to bring all sinners to Your feet that they may glorify Your mercy throughout endless ages (72).

God of great mercy, who deigned to send us Your only-begotten Son as the greatest proof of Your fathomless love and mercy, You do not reject sinners; but in Your boundless mercy You have opened for them also Your treasures, treasures from which they can draw abundantly, not only justification, but also all the sanctity that a soul can attain. Father of great mercy, I desire that all hearts turn with confidence to Your infinite mercy. No one will be justified before You if he is not accompanied by Your unfathomable mercy. When You reveal the mystery of Your mercy to us, there will not be enough of eternity to properly thank You for it (1122).

20i.13 In Time of Suffering

Oh, if only the suffering soul knew how much God loves it, it would die of joy and excess of happiness! Some day, we will know the value of suffering, but then we will no longer be able to suffer. The present moment is ours (963).

Jesus, do not leave me alone in suffering. You know, Lord, how weak I am. I am an abyss of wretchedness, I am nothingness itself; so what will be so strange if You leave me alone and I fall? I am an infant, Lord, so I cannot get along by myself. However, beyond all abandonment I trust, and in spite of my own feeling I trust, and I am being completely transformed into trust — often in spite of what I feel. Do not lessen any of my sufferings, only give me strength to bear them. Do with me as You please, Lord, only give me the grace to be able to love You in every event and circumstance. Lord, do not lessen my cup of bitterness, only give me strength that I may be able to drink it all (1489).

20i.14 For a Good Death

O merciful Jesus, stretched on the cross, be mindful of the hour of my death. O most merciful Heart of Jesus, opened with a lance, shelter me at the last moment of my life. O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fountain of unfathomable mercy for me. O dying Jesus, Hostage of mercy, avert the Divine wrath at the hour of my death (813)...

O my Jesus, may the last days of my exile be spent totally according to Your most holy will. I unite my sufferings, my bitterness and my last agony itself to Your Sacred Passion; and I offer myself for the whole world to obtain an abundance of God's mercy for souls... I firmly trust and commit myself entirely to Your holy will, which is mercy itself. Your mercy will be everything for me at the last hour (1574).

20i.15 To the Mother of God

O Mary, my Mother and my Lady, I offer You my soul, my body, my life and my death, and all that will come after it. I place everything in Your hands. O my Mother, cover my soul with Your virginal mantle and grant me the grace of purity of heart, soul and body. Defend me with Your power against all enemies, and especially against those who hide their malice behind the mask of virtue (79) ... Fortify my soul that pain may not break it. Mother of grace, teach me to live by God's power (315) ...

O Mary ... a terrible sword has pierced Your holy soul. Except for God, no one knows of Your suffering. Your soul does not break; it is brave, because it is with Jesus. Sweet Mother, unite my soul to Jesus, because it is only then that I will be able to endure all trials and tribulations, and only in union with Jesus will my little sacrifices be pleasing to God. Sweetest Mother, continue to teach me about the interior life. May the sword of suffering never break me. O pure Virgin, pour courage into my heart and guard it (915).

20i.16 Prayer to obtain grace through intercession of St. Faustina

St. Faustina, you told us that your mission would continue after your death and that you would not forget us (*Diary*, 281, 1582).

Our Lord also granted you a great privilege, telling you to “distribute graces as you will, to whom you will, and when you will” (31).

Relying on this, I ask your intercession for the graces I need, especially to be a living Eucharist and a saint.

Help me, above all, to trust in Jesus as you did and thus to glorify His mercy every moment of my life.

20i.17 The Canonization _of Sister Faustina

April 30, 2000: Before some 250,000 pilgrims and the television cameras of the world, Pope John Paul II canonized St. Faustina Kowalska, “the great apostle of Divine Mercy.”

But he also “canonized” the Divine Mercy message and devotion by declaring the Second Sunday of Easter as “Divine Mercy Sunday” for the universal Church:

It is important that we accept the whole message that comes to us from the word of God on this Second Sunday of Easter, which from now on throughout the Church will be called "Divine Mercy Sunday." (Divine Mercy Sunday, April 30, 2000)

Divine Mercy Sunday capsulizes the Divine Mercy message and devotion, and in this way by the declaration of Divine Mercy Sunday, he "canonized" the Divine Mercy message and devotion.

In one of the most extraordinary homilies of his pontificate, Pope John Paul II repeated three times that Sr. Faustina is "God's gift to our time." She made the message of Divine Mercy the "bridge to the third millennium." He then said:

By this act of canonization of Sr. Faustina I intend today to pass this message on to the third millennium. I pass it on to all people, so that they will learn to know ever better the true face of God and the true face of their neighbor. In fact, love of God and love of ones neighbor are inseparable.

He exhorted all of us to join our voices to Mary, Mother of Mercy, and Saint Faustina "who made her life a hymn to mercy" and "sing the mercies of the Lord forever" (Ps 89:2).

He further exhorted us to make our own her prayer of trusting abandonment and say with firm hope:

Jesus I trust in You!

Because of the significance of his homily the whole text is given for your edification and study — see section 20j.3.

20i.18 Memorare To Saint Joseph

Blessed Faustina wrote in her Diary: "St. Joseph urged me to have a constant devotion to him. He himself told me to recite every day three prayers [the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be], and the Memorare once every day. He looked at me with great kindness and gave me to know how much he is supporting this work [of mercy]. He has promised me his special help and protection. I recite the requested prayers every day and feel his special protection" (1203).

The Memorare is the prayer to St. Joseph that Blessed Faustina's religious community recited daily:

Remember, O most pure spouse of Mary, and my dearly beloved guardian, St. Joseph, that never was it known that anyone who invoked your care and requested your help was left without consolation.

Inspired with this confidence, I come to you, and with all the ardor of my spirit I commend myself to you. Do not reject my prayer, O Foster Father of the Savior, but graciously receive and answer it. Amen.

20i.19 For Fidelity to God's Will

O Jesus, stretched out upon the cross, I implore You, give me the grace of doing faithfully the most holy will of Your Father, in all things, always and everywhere. And when this will of God will seem to me very harsh and difficult to fulfill, it is then I beg You, Jesus, may power and strength flow upon me from Your wounds and may my lips keep repeating, "Your will be done, O Lord." O Savior of the world, Lover of man's salvation, who in such terrible torment and pain forget Yourself to think only of the salvation of souls, O most compassionate Jesus, grant me the grace to forget myself that I may live totally for souls, helping You in the work of salvation, according to the most holy will of Your Father (1265).

20j Homilies of Pope John Paul II _on Divine Mercy

20j.1 The Beatification of _Sister Faustina

Homily by Pope John Paul II_April 18,1993

(L'Osservatore Romano, April 21, 1993)

On Sunday, April 18, Sister Faustina was beatified by Pope John II in St. Peter's Square in Vatican City during a Mass celebrated with over 100,000 pilgrims from all over the world. During the Mass the Pope preached the homily in Italian, Spanish, Polish, and English, based on the readings for the Second Sunday of Easter. The following excerpts are taken from that homily.

“Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, for His mercy endures forever” (Ps 118 [1171:1]).

Like a band of light this psalm of thanksgiving passes through the octave of Easter. It is the choral “thank you” of the Church which adores God for the gift of Christ’s resurrection: for the gift of new and eternal life revealed in the risen Lord. With one heart the Church adores and thanks Him for the infinite love which has been communicated to every person and to the whole universe in Him...

I salute you, Sister Faustina. Beginning today the Church calls you Blessed, especially the Church in Poland and Lithuania. O Faustina, how extraordinary your life is! Precisely you, the poor and simple daughter of Mazovia, of the Polish people, were chosen by Christ to remind people of this great mystery of Divine Mercy!

You bore this mystery within yourself, leaving this world after a short life, filled with suffering. However, at the same time, this mystery has become a prophetic reminder to the world, to Europe. Your message of Divine Mercy was born almost on the eve of World War II. Certainly you would have been amazed if you could have experienced upon this earth what this message meant for the suffering people during that hour of torment, and how it spread throughout the world. Today, we truly believe, you contemplate in God the fruits of your mission on earth. Today you experience it at its very source, which is your Christ, “dives in misericordia.”

“I clearly feel that my mission does not end with death, but begins,” Sister Faustina wrote in her diary. And it truly did! Her mission continues and is yielding astonishing fruit. It is truly marvelous how her devotion to the merciful Jesus is spreading in our contemporary world and gaining so many human hearts! This is doubtlessly *a sign of the times — a sign of our 20th century*. The balance of this century which is now ending, in addition to the advances which have often surpassed those of preceding eras, presents a deep restlessness and fear of the future. Where, if not in The Divine Mercy, can the world find refuge and the light of hope? Believers understand that perfectly.

“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. Give thanks to the Lord, for He is merciful.”

Today, on the day of the Beatification of Sister Faustina, we praise the Lord for the great things He has done in her soul, we praise and thank Him for the great things He has done and always continues to do in the souls who through Sister Faustina’s witness and message discover the infinite depths of The Divine Mercy.

20j.2 At the Shrine of Divine Mercy

June 7, 1997

At the Shrine of Divine Mercy in Lagiewniki, outside of Krakow, Poland, where the relics of Blessed Faustina are kept, John Paul II addressed the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. It was a personal testimony of his own involvement with the message of Divine Mercy and a sweeping summary of both the message and devotion of the Divine Mercy.

The following excerpts highlight the Pope’s personal experience of Divine Mercy, followed by the text of the homily.

Summary and Excerpts of Homily

Purpose of his pilgrimage: “I have come here ‘to sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever’ (Ps 89).”

Urgency: “There is nothing that mankind needs more than Divine Mercy.”

The Message: Divine Mercy is “that love which is benevolent, which is compassionate, which raises man above his weakness to the infinite heights of the holiness of God.”

The Image: Those who gaze on the image of the merciful Jesus, hear like Blessed Faustina, “Fear nothing, I am with you.”

Trust: “Those who sincerely say ‘Jesus, I trust in You’ will find comfort in all their anxieties and fears.

The Church: regards the message of Divine Mercy as “the light of hope” and “unceasingly implores mercy for all.”

Commends: “the concerns of the Church and humanity to the merciful Christ.”

Entrusts to the Divine Mercy: “once more [his] Petrine ministry, ‘Jesu Ufam Tobie!’ [Jesus, I trust in You!].”

Personal Witness: “The message of Divine Mercy has always been near and dear to me.”

Pontificate: “I took with me [the message of Divine Mercy] to the See of Peter and which in a sense forms the image of this Pontificate.”

Divine Mercy Sunday: “I give thanks to divine Providence that I have been enabled to contribute personally to the fulfillment of Christ’s will through the institution of the Feast of Divine Mercy [in Poland] .

Chaplet of The Divine Mercy: “I pray unceasingly that God will ‘have mercy on us and on the whole world’” (Chaplet).

Challenge to the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy: “Accept the responsibility of your extraordinary vocation! The people of today need your proclamation of Divine Mercy, your works of mercy, and your prayer for mercy.”

Prayer for all: “May the Divine Mercy transform hearts ... we all need it so much: as the third millennium approaches.”

“I cordially bless all those devoted to the Divine Mercy.”

Homily

“Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo” [“I will sing the mercies of the Lord forever” — Ps. 89:1].

I have come here to this shrine as a pilgrim to take part in the unending hymn in honor of Divine Mercy. The psalmist of the Lord had intoned it, expressing what every generation preserved and will continue to preserve as a most precious fruit of faith.

There is nothing that man needs more than Divine Mercy — that love which is benevolent, which is compassionate, which raises man above his weakness to the infinite heights of the holiness of God.

In this place we become particularly aware of this. From here, in fact, went out the Message of Divine Mercy that Christ himself chose to pass on to our generation through Blessed Faustina.

And it is *a message that is clear and understandable for everyone*. Anyone can come here, look at this image of the merciful Jesus, His Heart radiating grace, and hear in the depths of his own soul what Blessed Faustina heard: *“Fear nothing. I am with you always”* (*Diary*, 586).

And if this person responds with a sincere heart: “*Jesus, I trust in you,*” he will find comfort in all his anxieties and fears. In this “dialogue of abandonment,” there is established between man and Christ a *special bond that sets love free*. And “there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear” (1 Jn 4:18).

The Church rereads the message of mercy in order to bring with greater effectiveness to this generation at the end of the millennium and to future generations *the light of hope*. Unceasingly the Church implores from God mercy for everyone.

“At no time and in no historical period — especially at a moment as critical as our own — can the Church forget the prayer that is a cry for the mercy of God amid the many forms of evil which weigh upon humanity and threaten it...

“The more the human conscience succumbs to secularization, loses its sense of the very meaning of the word ‘mercy,’ moves away from God, and distances itself from the mystery of mercy, the more the Church has the right and the duty to appeal to the God of mercy ‘with loud cries’” (*Dives in misericordia*, n. 15).

Precisely for this reason, this shrine, too, has found a place on my pilgrim itinerary. I come here to commend the concerns of the Church and of humanity to the merciful Christ. On the threshold of the third millennium, *I come to entrust to Him once more my Petrine ministry — “Jesus, I trust in you!”*

The message of Divine Mercy has always been near and dear to me. It is as if history had inscribed it in the tragic experience of the Second World War. In those difficult years it was a *particular support and an inexhaustible source of hope*, not only for the people of Krakow but for the entire nation.

This was also my personal experience, which I took with me to the See of Peter and which it in a sense forms the image of this Pontificate.

I give thanks to divine Providence that I have been enabled to contribute personally to the fulfilment of Christ’s will, through the institution of the Feast of Divine Mercy. Here, near relics of Blessed Faustina Kowalska, I give thanks also for the gift of her beatification. I pray unceasingly that God will have “mercy on us and the whole world” [From The Chaplet of Divine Mercy, section 20f].

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (Mt 5:7).

Dear Sisters! An extraordinary vocation is your. Choosing from among you Blessed Faustina, Christ has made your congregation the guardian of this place, and at the same time he has called you to a particular apostolate, that of His mercy. I ask you: accept this responsibility!

The people of today need your *proclamation of mercy*: they need your works of mercy and they need your *prayer to obtain mercy* [cf Diary, 742].

Do not neglect any of these dimensions of the apostolate. Fulfil it in union with the Archbishop of Krakow, to whose heart is so dear the devotion to The Divine Mercy, and it in union with the whole ecclesial community over which he presides.

May this shared work bear much fruit! May The Divine Mercy transform people’s hearts! May this shrine, known already in many parts of the world, become a center of worship of The Divine Mercy which shines on the whole Church!...

I cordially bless all who are present here and all those devoted to The Divine Mercy.

20j.3 St. Faustina: God's gift _to our time

Canonization Homily by Pope John Paul II

(L'Osservatore Romano, May 3, 2000)

1. *"Confitemini Domino quoniam bonus, quoniam. in saeculum misericordia eius"*; "Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his steadfast love endures for ever" (Ps 118:1). So the Church sings on the Octave of Easter, as if receiving from Christ's lips these words of the Psalm; from the lips of the risen Christ, who bears the great message of divine mercy and entrusts its ministry to the Apostles in the Upper Room: "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you ... Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (Jn 20:21-23).

Before speaking these words, Jesus shows his hands and his side. He points, that is, to the wounds of the Passion, especially the wound in his heart, the source from which flows the great wave of mercy poured out on humanity. From that heart Sr. Faustina Kowalska, the blessed whom from now on we will call a saint, will see two rays of light shining from that heart and illuminating the world: *"the two rays"*, Jesus himself explained to her one day, *"represent blood and water"* (*Diary*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, #299).

2. *Blood and water!* We immediately think of the testimony given by the Evangelist John, who, when a soldier on Calvary pierced Christ's side with his spear, sees blood and water flowing from it (cf. Jn 19:34). Moreover, if the blood recalls the sacrifice of the Cross and the gift of the Eucharist, the water, in Johannine symbolism, represents not only Baptism but also the gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn 3:5; 4:14; 7:37-39).

Divine Mercy reaches human beings through the heart of Christ crucified: *"My daughter, say that I am love and mercy personified"*, Jesus will ask Sr. Faustina (*Diary*, 1074). Christ pours out this mercy on humanity through the sending of the Spirit who, in the Trinity, is the Person-Love. And is not mercy love's "second name" (cf. *Dives in misericordia*, n.7), understood in its deepest and most tender aspect, in its ability to take upon itself the burden of any need and, especially, in its immense capacity for forgiveness?

Today my joy is truly great in presenting the life and witness of *Sr. Faustina Kowalska* to the whole Church as a gift of God for our time. By divine Providence, the life of this humble daughter of Poland was completely linked with the history of the 20th century, the century we have just left behind. In fact, it was between the First and Second World Wars that Christ entrusted his message of mercy to her. Those who remember, who were witnesses and participants in the events of those years and the horrible sufferings they caused for millions of people, know well how necessary was the message of mercy.

Jesus told Sr. Faustina: *"Humanity will not find peace until it turns trustfully to divine mercy"* (*Diary*, 300). Through the work of the Polish religious, this message has become linked forever to the 20th century, the last of the second millennium and the bridge to the third. It is not a new message but can be considered a gift of special enlightenment that helps us to relive the Gospel of Easter more intensely, to offer it as a ray of light to the men and women of our time.

3. What will the years ahead bring us? What will man's future on earth be like? We are not given to know. However, it is certain that in addition to new progress there will unfortunately be no lack of painful experiences. But the light of divine mercy, which the Lord in a way wished to return to the world through Sr. Faustina's charism, will illumine the way for the men and women of the third millennium.

However, as the Apostles once did, today too humanity must welcome into the upper room of history the risen Christ, who shows the wounds of his Crucifixion and repeats: *Peace be with you!* Humanity must let itself be touched and pervaded by the Spirit given to it by the risen Christ. It is the Spirit who heals the wounds of the heart, pulls down the barriers that separate us from God and divide us from one another, and at the same time, restores the joy of the Father's love and of fraternal unity.

4. It is important then that we accept the whole message that comes to us from the word of God on this Second Sunday of Easter, which from now on throughout the Church *will be called "Divine Mercy Sunday"*. In the various readings, the liturgy seems to indicate the path of mercy which, while re-establishing the relationship of each person with God, also creates new relations of fraternal solidarity among human beings. Christ has taught us that "man not only receives and experiences the mercy of God, but is also called 'to practice mercy' towards others: 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy'" (Mt 5:7) (*Dives in misericordia*, n.14). He also showed us the many paths of mercy, which not only forgives sins but reaches out to all human needs. Jesus bent over every kind of human poverty, material and spiritual.

His message of mercy continues to reach us through his hands held out to suffering man. This is how Sr. Faustina saw him and proclaimed him to people on all the continents when, hidden in her convent at Lagiewniki in Krakow, she made her life a hymn to mercy: *Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo*.

5. Sr. Faustina's canonization has a particular eloquence: by this act I intend today to pass this message on to the new millennium. I pass it on to all people, so that they will learn to know ever better the true face of God and the true face of their brethren.

In fact, love of God and love of one's brothers and sisters are inseparable, as the First Letter of John has reminded us: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments" (5:2). Here the Apostle reminds us of the truth of love, showing us its measure and criterion in the observance of the commandments.

It is not easy to love with a deep love, which lies in the authentic gift of self. This love can only be learned by penetrating the mystery of God's love. Looking at him being one with his fatherly heart, we are able to look with new eyes at our brothers and sisters, with an attitude of unselfishness and solidarity, of generosity and forgiveness. All this is mercy!

To the extent that humanity penetrates the mystery of this merciful gaze, it will seem possible to fulfil the ideal we heard in today's first reading: The community of believers were of one heart and one mind. None of them ever claimed anything as his own; rather everything was held in common" (Acts 4:32). Here mercy gave form to human relations and community life; it constituted the basis for the sharing of goods. This led to the spiritual and corporal "works of mercy". Here mercy became a concrete way of being "neighbor" to one's neediest brothers and sisters.

6. Sr. Faustina Kowalska wrote in her Diary: "*I feel tremendous pain when I see the sufferings of my neighbors. All my neighbors' sufferings reverberate in my own heart; I carry their anguish in my heart in such a way that it even physically destroys me. I would like all their sorrows to fall upon me, in order to relieve my neighbor*" (Diary, #1039). This is the degree of compassion to which love leads, when it takes the love of God as its measure!

It is this love which must inspire humanity today, if it is to face the crisis of the meaning of life, the challenges of the most diverse needs and, especially, the duty to defend the dignity of every human person. Thus the message of divine mercy is also implicitly *a message about the value of every human being*. Each person is precious in God's eyes; Christ gave his life for each one; to everyone the Father gives his Spirit and offers intimacy.

7. This consoling message is addressed above all to those who, afflicted by a particularly harsh trial or crushed by the weight of the sins they committed, have lost all confidence in life and are tempted to give in to despair. To them the gentle face of Christ is offered; those rays from his heart touch them and shine upon them, warm them, show them the way and fill them with hope. How many souls have been consoled by the prayer "*Jesus, I trust in you*", which Providence intimated through Sr. Faustina! This simple act of abandonment to Jesus dispels the thickest clouds and lets a ray of light penetrate every life. *Jezu, ufam tobie*.

8. *Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo* (Ps 88 [89]:2). Let us too, the pilgrim Church, join our voice to the voice of Mary most holy, "Mother of Mercy", to the voice of this new saint who sings of mercy with all God's friends in the heavenly Jerusalem.

And you, Faustina, a gift of God to our time, a gift from the land of Poland to the whole Church, obtain for us an awareness of the depth of divine mercy; help us to have a living experience of it and to bear witness to it among our brothers and sisters. May your message of light and hope spread throughout the world, spurring sinners to conversion, calming rivalries and hatred and opening individuals and nations to the practice of brotherhood. Today, fixing our gaze with you on the face of the risen Christ, let us make our own your prayer of trusting abandonment and say with firm hope: Christ Jesus, I trust in you! Jezu, ufam tobie!

20j.4 I Entrust the world to _Divine Mercy

by Pope John Paul II

The following are excerpts from Pope John Paul II's homily during the Mass for the dedication of the Divine Mercy Shrine in Lagiewniki, a suburb of Krakow, Poland, on August 17, 2002.

“O inconceivable and unfathomable Mercy of God,
Who can worthily adore you and sing your praises?
O greatest attribute of God Almighty, You are the sweet hope of sinners” (*Diary*, 951).

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. Today I repeat these simple and straightforward words of Saint Faustina, in order to join her and all of you in adoring the inconceivable and unfathomable mystery of God's mercy. Like Saint Faustina, we wish to proclaim that apart from the mercy of God there is no other source of hope for mankind. We desire to repeat with faith: *Jesus, I trust in you!*

Proclamation of trust in divine mercy needed in our time

This proclamation, this confession of trust in the all-powerful love of God, is especially needed in our own time, when mankind is experiencing bewilderment in the face of many manifestations of evil. *The invocation of God's mercy* needs to rise up from the depth of hearts filled with suffering, apprehension and uncertainty, and at the same time yearning for an infallible source of hope. That is why we have come here today, to this Shrine of Lagiewniki, in order to glimpse once more in Christ the face of the Father: “the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation” (2 Cor 1:3). With the eyes of our soul, we long to look into the eyes of the merciful Jesus, in order to find deep within his gaze the reflection of his inner life, as well as the light of grace which we have already received so often, and which God holds out to us anew each day and on the last day.

Thanks to all who spread the message and helped build the shrine to honor the Mercy of God

2. We are about to dedicate this new church to the Mercy of God. Before doing so, I wish to *offer heartfelt thanks* to those who contributed to its construction....In [the] spirit of faith I have come to Lagiewniki to dedicate this new church. I am convinced that this is the special place chosen by God to sow the grace of his mercy. I pray that this church will always be a place where the message of God's merciful love is proclaimed; a place of conversion and repentance; a place for the celebration of the Eucharist; a fountain of mercy; a place of prayer and of constant appeals for mercy for ourselves and for the whole world. I pray in the words of Solomon: “Have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his supplication, O Lord my God, hearkening to the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prays before you this day; that your eyes may be open night and day towards this house... Hearken to the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray in this place. Hear in heaven, your dwelling place; and when you hear, forgive” (1 Kg 8:28-30).

The Holy Spirit enables us to view sin in the light of the merciful and forgiving love of God

4. *“But the hour is coming, and now is, when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him”* (Jn 4:23). When we read these words of the Lord Jesus here in the Shrine of Divine Mercy, we are particularly aware that *no one can come here except in Spirit and truth*. It is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter and the Spirit of Truth, who guides us along the ways of Divine Mercy. By convincing the world “concerning sin and righteousness and judgement” (Jn 16:8), he also makes known the fullness of salvation in Christ. This “convincing” concerning sin *is doubly related to the Cross of Christ*. On the one hand, the Holy Spirit enables us, through Christ’s Cross, to acknowledge sin, every sin, *in the full dimension of evil which it contains and inwardly conceals*. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit permits us, again through Christ’s Cross, to see sin *in the light of the mysterium pietatis*, that is, of the merciful and forgiving love of God (cf. *Dominum et vivificantem*, 32).

Consequently, this “convincing concerning sin” also becomes a conviction that *sin can be laid aside* and that man can be restored to his dignity as a son beloved of God. Indeed, the Cross “is the most profound condescension of God to man [...]. The Cross is like a touch of eternal love upon the most painful wounds of man’s earthly existence” (*Dives in misericordia*, 8).

Cornerstone comes from Mt. Calvary

The cornerstone of this Shrine will always be a reminder of this truth, for it was brought here from Mount Calvary, as if from beneath the Cross on which Jesus Christ triumphed over sin and death.

I firmly believe that this new church will always be a place where people will come before God in Spirit and truth. They will come with the trust which accompanies all those who humbly open their hearts to the working of God’s merciful love, to that love which is stronger than even the greatest sin. Here, in the fire of divine love, human hearts will burn with desire for conversion, and whoever looks for hope will find comfort.

Mercy is needed to ensure that every injustice in the world will come to an end in the splendor of truth

5. “Eternal Father, I offer to you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, for our sins and those of the whole world; by the sufferings of his Passion, have mercy upon us and upon the whole world” (*Diary*, 476). *Upon us and upon the whole world...* How greatly today’s world needs God’s mercy! In every continent, from the depth of human suffering, a cry for mercy seems to rise up. Where hatred and the thirst for revenge dominate, where war brings suffering and death to the innocent, there the grace of mercy is needed in order to settle human minds and hearts and to bring about peace. Wherever respect for life and human dignity are lacking, there is need of God’s merciful love, in whose light we see the inexpressible value of every human being. Mercy is needed in order to ensure that every injustice in the world will come to an end in the splendor of truth.

Solemn entrustment of the world to Divine Mercy to ensure universal radiation of message

Today, therefore, in this Shrine, I wish solemnly to entrust the world to Divine Mercy. I do so with the burning desire that the message of God’s merciful love, proclaimed here through Saint Faustina, may be made known to all the peoples of the earth and fill their hearts with hope. May this message radiate from this place to our beloved homeland and throughout the world. May the binding promise of the Lord Jesus be fulfilled: from here there must go forth “the spark which will prepare the world for his final coming” (cf. *Diary*, 1732).

This spark needs to be lighted by the grace of God. This fire of mercy needs to be passed on to the world. In the mercy of God the world will find peace and mankind will find happiness! I entrust this task to you, dear Brothers and Sisters, to the Church in Kraków and Poland, and to all the [devotees] of Divine Mercy who will come here from Poland and from throughout the world. May you be witnesses to mercy!

Solemn Act of entrustment of the world to Divine Mercy

6. God, merciful Father,
in your Son, Jesus Christ,
you have revealed your love
and poured it out upon us
in the Holy Spirit, the Comforter,
We entrust to you today the destiny
of the world and of every
man and woman.
Bend down to us sinners,
heal our weakness,
conquer all evil,
and grant that all the peoples
of the earth
may experience your mercy.
In You, the Triune God,
may they ever find
the source of hope.
Eternal Father,
by the Passion and Resurrection
of your Son,
have mercy on us and upon
the whole world!
Amen.

At the end of the Mass, before the final blessing, the Holy Father made these personal remarks:

At the end of this solemn liturgy, I desire to say that many of my personal memories are tied to this place. During the Nazi occupation, when I was working in the Solvay factory near here, I used to come here. Even now I recall the street that goes from Borek Falecki to Debniki that I took every day going to work on the different turns with the wooden shoes on my feet. They're the shoes that we used to wear then. How was it possible to imagine that one day the man with the wooden shoes would consecrate the Basilica of the Divine Mercy at Lągowo of Kraków.

I rejoice for the construction of this beautiful shrine dedicated to the Divine Mercy. I entrust to the care of Cardinal Macharski and to the whole Archdiocese of Kraków and to the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy the material, and especially, the spiritual upkeep of the shrine. May this collaboration in the work of spreading the devotion of the Merciful Jesus give blessed fruit in the hearts of the faithful in Poland and in the whole world.

May the merciful God bless abundantly all the pilgrims who come and who will come here in the future.

20j.5 The Mercy of God is Reflected In Human Mercy

by Pope John Paul II

On Sunday, 18 August, 2002, at Blonie Park in Kraków, the Holy Father celebrated the Mass of Beatification to raise to the glory of the altars four Servants of God, Zygmunt Felinski, Jan Beyzym, and Santia Szymkowiak. The Pope held them up as heroic witnesses to God's mercy in their generous outreach to their neighbor in need in the most difficult circumstances of modern history... The Holy Father called for a new creativity in charity... May this "creativity never be lacking in the residents of Kraków and in all the people of our homeland. It represents the pastoral plan of the Church in Poland. May the message of God's mercy be reflected always in works of human mercy!" Here is a translation of the homily of the Mass of Beatification.

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15:2).

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. The words of Jesus which we just heard are closely related to the theme of today's liturgical assembly in Blonie in Kraków: *"God, rich in mercy"*. This phrase in a way captures the entire truth about the love of God which has redeemed humanity. *"God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ" (Eph 2:4-5)*. The fullness of this love was revealed in the sacrifice of the Cross. For *"greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13)*. *Here is the measure of God's love! Here is the measure of God's mercy!*

God calls us to witness to mercy in today's world

Once we recognize this truth, we become aware that Christ's call to love others even as he has loved us *calls all of us to that same measure*. We feel in some sense impelled *to make our lives a daily offering by showing mercy to our brothers and sisters*, drawing upon the gift of God's merciful love. We realize that God, in showing us mercy, calls upon us to become witnesses to mercy in today's world.

From Kraków with its rich tradition of mercy, I greet Poland and all the pilgrims who have joined us

2. The call to be witnesses of mercy resounds with particular eloquence here, in my beloved Kraków, dominated by the Shrine of Divine Mercy of Lągiwniki and its new church which yesterday I had the joy of consecrating. Here this call sounds familiar, for it appeals to the age-old tradition of the City, which has always been known for its *readiness to assist those in need*. We cannot forget that this tradition includes the numerous Saints and Beati — priests, consecrated persons and laity — who devoted their lives to works of mercy. Beginning with Bishop Stanislaus, Queen Hedwig, John of Kenty and Piotr Skarga, and continuing to Brother Albert, Angela Salawa and Cardinal Sapieha, this heritage of mercy has been passed down by generations of Christians in this City over many centuries. *Today this heritage has been placed in our hands and it must not be forgotten.*

I thank Cardinal Franciszek Macharski whose words of greeting have reminded us of this tradition. I am grateful for the invitation to visit my dear Kraków and for the hospitality offered to me. I greet everyone present, beginning with the Cardinals and the Bishops, and all those who share in this Eucharist through radio and television.

I greet the whole of Poland. In spirit I retrace the luminous journey by which Saint Faustina Kowalska was being prepared to receive the message of mercy — from Warsaw, on to Plock, Vilnius and finally Kraków — and I recall all those who cooperated with the Apostle of Mercy on that journey. I embrace with affection my countrymen, particularly the suffering and the sick; those struggling with various difficulties, the unemployed, the homeless, the elderly and the lonely, and families with many children. I assure them of my spiritual closeness and I accompany them constantly in my prayer. My greeting also goes to my countrymen throughout the world. I also offer a heartfelt greeting to the pilgrims who have come here from various countries in Europe and from throughout the world.

A pressing call now to proclaim the message of mercy to the world in a new way

3. From the beginning of her existence the Church, pointing to the mystery of the Cross and the Resurrection, has preached the mercy of God, a pledge of hope and a source of salvation for man. Nonetheless, it would appear that *we today have been particularly called* to proclaim this message before the world. We cannot neglect this mission, if God himself has called us to it through the testimony of Saint Faustina.

God has chosen our own times for this purpose. Perhaps because the twentieth century, despite indisputable achievements in many areas, was marked in a particular way by the *"mystery of iniquity"*. With this heritage both of good and of evil, we have entered the new millennium. New prospects of development are opening up before mankind, together with hitherto unheard-of dangers. Frequently man lives as if God did not exist, and even puts himself in God's place. He claims for himself the Creator's right to interfere in the mystery of human life. He wishes to determine human life through genetic manipulation and to establish the limit of death. Rejecting divine law and moral principles, he openly attacks the family. In a variety of ways he attempts to silence the voice of God in human hearts; he wishes to make God the "great absence" in the culture and the conscience of peoples. The "mystery of iniquity" continues to mark the reality of the world.

In experiencing this mystery, man lives in fear of the future, of emptiness, of suffering, of annihilation. Perhaps for this very reason, it is as if Christ, using the testimony of a lowly Sister, entered our time in order to indicate clearly the source of relief and hope found in the eternal mercy of God.

The message of merciful love needs to resound forcefully anew. The world needs this love. The hour has come to bring Christ's message to everyone: to rulers and the oppressed, to those whose humanity and dignity seem lost in the *mysterium iniquitatis*. The hour has come when the message of Divine Mercy is able to fill hearts with hope and to become the spark of a new civilization: the civilization of love.

These four Blessed proclaim mercy with their lives

4. The Church desires tirelessly to proclaim this message, not only by convincing words, but by the ready practice of mercy. This is why she ceaselessly holds up stupendous examples of individuals *who out of love for God and for man "went forth and bore fruit"*. Today she adds four new Beati to their number. They lived at different times and led very different lives. But they are united by that particular feature of holiness which is *devotion to the cause of mercy*.

Blessed Sigismund Felix Felinski, Archbishop of Warsaw, during a difficult period marked by the lack of national freedom, urged everyone to persevere in generous service to the poor and to establish educational institutions and charitable works. He himself founded an orphanage and a school; he also brought the Sisters of Blessed Virgin Mary of Mercy to Warsaw and supported the work they began. After the failure of the insurrection of 1863, in a spirit of mercy towards his brothers and sisters he openly defended the persecuted. This fidelity cost him deportment to the interior of Russia, which lasted twenty years. Even there he continued to be mindful of the poor and distressed, showing them great love, patience and understanding. It has been written of him that "during his exile, oppressed on every side, in the poverty of prayer, he remained always alone at the foot of the Cross, commending himself to Divine Mercy".

His was an example of pastoral ministry which today in a special way I wish to entrust to my Brothers in the Episcopate. Dear Brothers, Archbishop Felinski supports your efforts *to create and carry out a pastoral program of mercy*. May this program be the expression of your commitment, primarily in the life of the Church and then, as fitting and necessary, in the social and political life of the Nation, of Europe and of the world.

Inspired by this spirit of social charity, Archbishop Felinski gave himself fully in defending the freedom of the nation. This is necessary today also, when different forces - often under the guidance of a false ideology of freedom - try to take over this land. When the noisy propaganda of liberalism, of freedom without truth or responsibility, grows stronger in our country too, the Shepherds of the Church cannot fail to proclaim the one fail-proof philosophy of freedom, which is the truth of the Cross of Christ. This philosophy of freedom finds full motivation in the history of our nation.

5. The desire to bring mercy to the neediest led Blessed Jan Beyzym to far-away Madagascar, where, out of love for Christ, he devoted himself to caring for lepers. Day and night he served those who had been emarginated and separated from social life. By his works of mercy on behalf of the abandoned and despised, he bore extraordinary witness. This was a witness that rung out first in Kraków, then in Poland, and afterwards among Poles overseas. Funds were collected to construct the hospital named after Our Lady of Czestochowa, which still stands today. One of those who promoted this help was Saint Brother Albert.

I am pleased that this *spirit of solidarity in mercy continues to be active in the Church in Poland*; this is seen in the many programs lending assistance to the communities struck by natural catastrophes in different parts of the world, it is also seen in the recent initiative to purchase surplus grain and send it to those suffering hunger in Africa. I hope that this project will come to fruition.

The charitable work of Blessed Jan Beyzym was an integral component of his fundamental mission: bringing the Gospel to those who do not know it. *This is the greatest gift of mercy*: bringing people to Christ and giving them the opportunity to know and savor his love. Therefore I ask you: pray for the birth of missionary vocations in the Church in Poland. Support missionaries unceasingly with your prayers.

6. Blessed Jan Balicki's life was marked by his service of mercy. As a priest, his heart was always open to the needy. His ministry of mercy, besides offering help to the sick and the poor, found a particularly energetic expression in the *confessional*, where he was filled with patience and humility, always open to bringing the repentant sinner back to the throne of divine grace.

With this in mind, I turn to the priests and seminarians: I beseech you, Brothers, do not forget that, *insofar as you are dispensers of Divine Mercy, you have a great responsibility*; remember also that *Christ himself comforts you with his promise* handed on through Saint Faustina: "Tell my priests that hardened sinners will soften at their words, when they speak of my boundless Mercy and of the compassion that I feel for them in my Heart" (Diary, 1521).

7. The work of mercy traced out a path in the religious vocation of Blessed Santia Janina Szymkowiak, Sister "Seraphica". She had already received from her family an ardent love for the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and in this spirit she was filled with goodness towards others, especially the poor and the needy. She began to lend help to the poor first as a member of the Marian Guild and of the Saint Vincent Mercy Association; then, having embraced the religious life, she devoted herself to the service of others with greater fervour. She accepted the difficult times of the Nazi occupation as an occasion to give herself completely to the needy. She considered her religious vocation a gift of Divine Mercy.

As I greet the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of Sorrows, the "Seraphic" Sisters, I turn to all religious and consecrated persons. Let Blessed Santia be your patron. Make your own her spiritual witness, summarized in a simple phrase: "To give yourself to God, you have to give yourself to the point of totally losing yourself".

8. Brothers and Sisters, as we contemplate these Beati, I wish to recall once more what I wrote in the Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*: "Man attains to the merciful love of God, his mercy, *to the extent that he himself is interiorly transformed in the spirit of that love towards his neighbor*" (No. 14). On this path, may we rediscover ever more profoundly the mystery of Divine Mercy and live it in our daily lives!

Faced with the modern forms of poverty that, as we all know, are not lacking in our country, what is needed today is - as I called it in my Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* - “a new ‘creativity’ in charity” (No. 50), in a spirit of solidarity towards our neighbor, so that the help we lend will be a witness of “sharing between brothers and sisters” (*ibid.*). May this “creativity” never be lacking in the residents of Kraków and in all the people of our homeland. It represents the pastoral plan of the Church in Poland. May the message of God’s mercy be reflected always in works of human mercy!

We must take a loving look around ourselves if we are to be aware of the neighbor by our side, who - because of the loss of work, home, the possibility to maintain his family in a decent manner and to educate his children - feels a sense of abandonment, of being lost, of distrust. This “creativity in charity” is needed to provide material and spiritual assistance to neglected children; to refrain from turning one’s back on the boy or girl who have gotten lost in the world of addiction or crime; to give advice, consolation, spiritual support to those engaged in an internal struggle with evil. May this “creativity” never be lacking when a needy person pleads: “Give us this day our daily bread!”. Thanks to brotherly love, this bread will not be lacking. “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (Mt 5:7).

9. During my 1979 pilgrimage to Poland, here in Blonie I said that “when we are strong with the Spirit of God, we are also strong with faith in man - strong with faith, hope and love, which are inseparable - and we are ready to bear witness to the cause of man before those who really have this cause at heart” (Homily at Mass at Blonie Kraskowie, 10 June 1979, 4). Therefore, I asked you: “Never disdain charity, which is ‘the greatest of these’ and which shows itself in the Cross. Without it, human life has no roots and no meaning” (*ibid.*, 5).

Brothers and Sisters, today I repeat this invitation: open yourselves to God’s greatest gift, to his love that, through the Cross of Christ, has revealed itself to the world as merciful love. Today, living in different times, at the dawn of the new century and millennium, continue to be “ready to bear witness to the cause of man”. Today, with all my strength, I beseech the sons and daughters of the Church, and all people of good will: *never, ever separate “the cause of man” from the love of God.* Help modern men and women to experience God’s merciful love! This love, in its splendor and warmth, *will save humanity!*

20k EPILOGUE

DIVINE MERCY — THE ANSWER TO THE _TROUBLED WORLD

Adapted from Now is the Time for Mercy

On the evening TV news, there was yet another disturbing and very visual report on crime, followed by a terrifying report on bombings. The other day, a woman came seeking help in dealing with the death of her young son, who had committed suicide. Another came, torn apart by the knowledge that her teenage daughter is pregnant and is planning an abortion. And so the litany of evil born of sin goes on and on — wars, divisions, divorce, crime, terrorism, poverty, famine — all overshadowed by the threat of annihilation of the world. The situation makes a father of a family dread raising his children in this sick and dying society. What should the proper response be?

In the Church, too, we are experiencing confusion as we hear of theologians and priests teaching sexual morality in opposition to the teaching of the Church — condoning artificial birth control, abortion, and homosexual activity. We are scandalized as we read of priests in jail for homosexual abuse of boys. We are disturbed by angry demonstrations fostering the ordination of women. We are shocked and saddened by public disagreement and vicious criticism of Pope John Paul II.

What parents want to send their children to a Catholic college that teaches this kind of confusion? Within the Church, we now have a plurality of infallibility! The Church as been invaded by the secularism of the world. What is the Christian response?

All too often, our *human* response is negative — we so easily become part of the problem by viewing this world as the end of it all. We respond to reports of increased crime and terrorism by fear and anxiety, and we grow in unrest, as we put new locks on the doors or raid the refrigerator. We find people to blame, and we focus on them our growing feelings of frustration, anger, and even hatred.

We see a man on the street, dazed by alcohol or drugs, and with a look of disgust, we cross the street to avoid him. To cope with the tension of a broken family or the unpleasantness at work, we take more tranquilizers or watch another movie on TV. We become more and more critical, more and more apathetic.

These human responses of fear, anger, hate, escape, denial, and despair are all just ways of “cursing the darkness.” They are useless, and they make things worse, because they are not Christian responses prompted by faith, hope, and love. They are worldly responses prompted by an acceptance of worldly values. When we curse the darkness, we become part of it.

Even when we manage to be more positive in our responses — reaching out to our neighbors, giving an encouraging word, helping with food and shelter, or even just listening — it doesn’t seem enough.

We know these things are good and must be continued, but how are they changing the world situation? What effect can I have on world morality by trying to convince my children not to watch immoral movies? How can I counter the influence of worldly theologians by my own efforts to remain true to Church teaching? How am I really helping to foster world peace by being pleasant to the people I meet? Sure, “if everyone lit just one candle,” it would make a difference; but in my heart I know that everyone won’t, and in such a darkness, what good is my little candle?

Our positive human responses are necessary; but, in themselves, they are not enough. They need to be conformed and united to God’s infinite response, thus bringing God’s sovereign action into the world — allowing God, through us, to bless the darkness with His light.

What is God’s response to the present situation in the Church and the world? Perhaps it is similar to His reaction to evil in the days of Noah:

“When the Lord saw how great was man’s wickedness on earth, and how no desire that his heart conceived was ever anything but evil, he regretted that he had made man on the earth and his heart was grieved” (Gen 6:5-6 NAB).

But Noah found favor in God’s sight, and for his sake, God saved the human race and creation through the wood of an Ark — a great pre-figuring of our salvation through the Holy one of God, Jesus Christ, Who saved us by the wood of the cross.

Today, we need to turn to the ark of salvation that God has provided for us — His infinite mercy! His mercy is like an ocean of love that is bottomless and limitless — always available for sinners trapped in evil, always capable of cleansing, healing, and transforming even the greatest of sinners, always reaching out to all of us.

We are at war! In order to win the war we must know and respond in three ways well described by Dr. Peter Kreeft in “How to Win the Culture War” (*Crisis*, June 1998):

- (1) That you are *at* war,
- (2) Who your enemy *is*, and
- (3) What weapons or strategies can defeat him.

(1) We are in a spiritual war — an all out war for souls.

(2) Our enemy is Satan and his fallen angels. Satan hates Divine Mercy.

(3) Our weapon and strategy is to trust in Divine Mercy — Jesus Incarnate — and implore God’s mercy “on us and on the whole world.”

The Vicar of Christ, Pope John Paul II, identifies the problem in the Church and the world as “lack of peace”; and he proclaims that the response of the Church to this problem is the *mercy of God* — the *only* answer. He challenges the Church not only to preach and practice mercy, but to *implore God’s mercy* (cf. *Rich in Mercy*, 15). Describing the evil of our day in terms of Noah, he encourages us to call upon the “motherly” love of God:

“Like the prophets, let us appeal to that love which has maternal characteristics — which like a mother goes after each of her children, after each lost sheep, even if the lost are in the millions, even if the evil in the world outweighs honesty, even if mankind deserves because of its sins a kind of modern ‘flood,’ as did the generation of Noah.”

He exhorts us also to cry to the Father’s love revealed in Jesus, the source of mercy:

“Let us then appeal also to that kind of fatherly love revealed to us by Christ in His messianic mission, which reached its ultimate expression in His cross, in His passion and in His Resurrection!”

In this cry for mercy, Mary is to be our model:

“Let us appeal to God through Christ, mindful of the words of Mary’s Magnificat which proclaims ‘mercy from age to age.’

“Let us cry out to God’s own mercy for this present generation!

“May the Church, which like Mary continues to be the spiritual mother of humankind, express in this prayer her total maternal concern, as well as that trusting love from which is born the most burning need for prayer.”

This appeal for mercy is love — love for God, whom modern man has rejected by his atheism and materialism; love for God, whose response to this rejection is forgiveness:

“This cry for mercy is at the same time an expression of our love of God, from Whom modern man has distanced himself and made of Him a stranger, proclaiming in various ways that he doesn’t ‘need’ God.

This then is mercy, the *love of God* Whose insult — rejection by modern man — we feel deeply and are ready to cry out with Christ on the cross, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do’ (Lk 23:34).”

It is also love for all mankind — each and every one of us:

“This cry for mercy is *love for all people*, the care which ensures for everyone all true good, and removes and drives away every sort of evil” (*Rich in Mercy* VIII:15).

Divine Mercy is the only answer to the problems of the world — there is no escape from that answer!

This message given to us by Our Lord through the Holy Father is the same message we receive through the revelations to Sister Faustina:

“*Mankind will have no peace until it turns with trust to My mercy*” (*Diary*, 300).

The essence of the devotion to The Divine Mercy — trust and mercy, expressed by word, deed, and prayer — is also the essence of the answer to problems in the Church and in the world. We are to be channels of His mercy to the world; we are to be merciful as the heavenly Father is merciful (cf. Lk 6:36), and so find favor with God, even as Noah did, thus cooperating in the salvation of this present age.

How are we to be channels of mercy? By the practice of trust and mercy in the face of every sinful and evil situation we encounter, We can respond to the situation in the church and world by our acts of mercy and by imploring mercy — not cursing the darkness, but blessing it with the mercy of God.

When my heart is heavy over a theological teaching doctrine not in keeping with the Church, I can cry out, “Jesus, Mercy!” When my mind is confused when a priest criticizes the Church and then leaves the priesthood, I can intercede like Sister Faustina and offer the pain in union with the Eucharistic sacrifice of Jesus for mercy on him. When my heart is crushed by the anguish of a broken marriage or rebellious children, I can grab hold of that deep pain — not denying or hiding from it — and cry out, “Come Holy Spirit, purify and transform this brokenness. Come, Lord Jesus, forgive us!”

These acts and cries for mercy may seem like little insignificant acts, but these are the very acts God asks of us — these are the humble acts God asked of His own mother, Mary; and of Sister Faustina. God asks us to follow the way of humility, the way He chose for His Son, Jesus.

Like Sister Faustina, we, too, are invited to make use of the great channels of mercy: the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation, the works of mercy, and prayer to The Divine Mercy.

This kind of response to the situation in the church and the world calls for trust in the Lord — a radical, total trust — that *He is God, He is in charge, and He cares and loves us with an everlasting love.*

The urgent need for this kind of response is the whole message of this book, a message that can be summarized in a few sentences:

“Mankind will have no peace until it turns with trust to My mercy” (*Diary*, 300).

JESUS, MERCY (cf. Lk 17:14).

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (Mt 5:7).

“O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of mercy for us, I trust in You” (*Diary*, 84).

Now is the time for mercy!

20k.1 Acknowledgements

Excerpts from the *Diary of Sr. M. Faustina Kowalska: Divine Mercy in my Soul*; Copyright 1987 Congregation of Marians of the Immaculate Conception, Stockbridge, MA 01263; printed with permission.

For more information about The Divine Mercy message and devotion, call the Association of Marian Helpers at 1-800-462-7426.

For material referred to in this article, see section 20k.2 — Further Reading on Divine Mercy.

The various sections in this compilation on the Divine Mercy message and devotion were gleaned by Father George W. Kosicki, C.S.B., from his various books and booklets written for the Congregation of Marians of the Immaculate Conception.

20k.2 Further Reading on Divine Mercy

The listing of Books and Booklets is taken from the 2002 catalogue of the Marian Helpers: Stockbridge, MA 01263-0004, 1-800-462-7426.

Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska: Divine Mercy in My Soul; English, 697 pages, Nbfd, \$12.00; (Spanish, 744 pages, BFDS, \$14.00). Our newest edition of the Diary of Saint Maria Faustina describing her revelations of Jesus as The Divine Mercy. Includes a preface and, up-to-date information on the Marians and the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, two religious congregations that promote the message of mercy. Includes a 24-page color photo section. Digest size.

Saint Maria Faustina: Her Life & Mission; SFK, \$16.00. A carefully researched, illustrated biography of Saint Faustina Kowalska. Maria Tarnawska, 455 pages.

The Life of Faustina Kowalska (formerly *Mercy My Mission*); DML6, \$13.00. A chronological presentation of the existence of evil spirits and the “all-out” spiritual warfare being waged even now between “Satan and the Woman clothed with the sun.” 146 pages.

Rejoice in the Lord Always, \$8.00. Learn the secret of true joy which can sustain you through the deepest trial, so unlike the fleeting happiness of this world which ultimately leads to emptiness. 92 pages.

Meet Saint Faustina; BKMSF, \$10.00. A stirring read for all who are touched by the lives of the saints — and by true stories of how God works through the lives of His people. 111 pages.

Why Mercy Sunday?; WMS, \$3.00. A unique book of questions and answers. Clear and concise answers to the most common questions about Mercy Sunday. 68 pages.

I Thirst; ITH, \$3.00. Satisfy Jesus' thirst for souls the way Saint Faustina and St. Teresa of Calcutta did. Fr. Kosicki uses their writings to show how our prayers and sacrifices can make an eternal difference for souls in need, especially the dying. 3 1/2" x 6", 73 pages.

Tell My Priests; DML9, \$8.00. A guide to the Divine Mercy message and devotion written by a priest for priests. A perfect gift to introduce your pastor or bishop to the Divine Mercy message. 124 pages.

Revelations of Divine Mercy; RDM, \$15.00. Experience the inexpressible grace and mercy of Jesus in 366 daily readings from the Diary of Saint Maria Faustina. Each month focuses on a particular theme, like love, trust, humility, and glory. 346 pages.

Special Urgency of Mercy: Why Sister Faustina?; SUM, \$7.00. Why is there a special urgency to the message of Divine Mercy? Why did God choose Sister Faustina to bring us this message? How does God describe His own mercy? Answers to these important questions and many more. 101 pages.

All prices are quoted in US funds

Booklets

Newly Revised, *The Divine Mercy Message and Devotion*; English, M17, \$4.00; English Large Print, M17L, \$5.00; (Spanish, M17S, \$3.00; Polish, PM17, \$3.00). Our most popular English booklet that has introduced hundreds of thousands of souls to the life-changing message of mercy has been updated with new material, color photos, high quality paper, and a durable cover. Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, with Vinny Flynn and Robert A. Stackpole. 88 pages.

I Demand Deeds of Mercy; IDDM, \$3.00. How does being merciful affect our journey to holiness? Is doing good things enough? Fr. Kosicki finds answers in the Diary of Saint Faustina, Church teaching, and the Bible. 34 pages, 3 1/2" x 6".

Divine Mercy As a Way of Life; CDWL, \$3.00; Dr. Bryan Thatcher shares with you how to live the message of Divine Mercy through his own experiences. 59 pages.

O Blessed Host, Have Mercy on Us!; OBH, \$3.00. This booklet provides more than 80 excerpts on the Eucharist from Saint Faustina's Diary. Ideal for use before or after Holy Mass or in adoration. Fr. George W. Kosicki, CSB. 64 pages.

Praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet During Adoration for the Sick and Dying; CDMPPA, \$3.00. Take advantage of Our Lord's promise of great mercy for those who are dying by praying the Chaplet for them during adoration. A great resource for those who minister to the dying. 40 pages, 5 black & white illustrations.

Come to My Mercy; DML12, \$3.00. A complete step-by-step instruction manual for how to give and receive mercy. Here are promises and desires of the Merciful Savior as recorded in the Diary of Saint Faustina. Fr. George W. Kosicki, CSB, 32 pages.

Conversations with the Merciful God; CBKC, \$3.00. Moving conversations between the Merciful Savior and five kinds of souls: sinful, despairing, suffering, striving, and perfect. All taken from the Diary of Saint Faustina. Fr. George W. Kosicki, CSB, and Vinny Flynn. 32 pages.

St. Maria Faustina Kowalska, Secretary and Apostle of The Divine Mercy; CCBSF, \$3.00. Learn more about the "Mercy Saint." For those who are daunted by the prospect of reading her *Diary* or long biographies, this booklet is the perfect choice. Sr. Barbara of Jesus Tomaszewska. 67 pages.

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