

DEVOTION TO THE DIVINE MERCY

THE HUMBLE INSTRUMENT



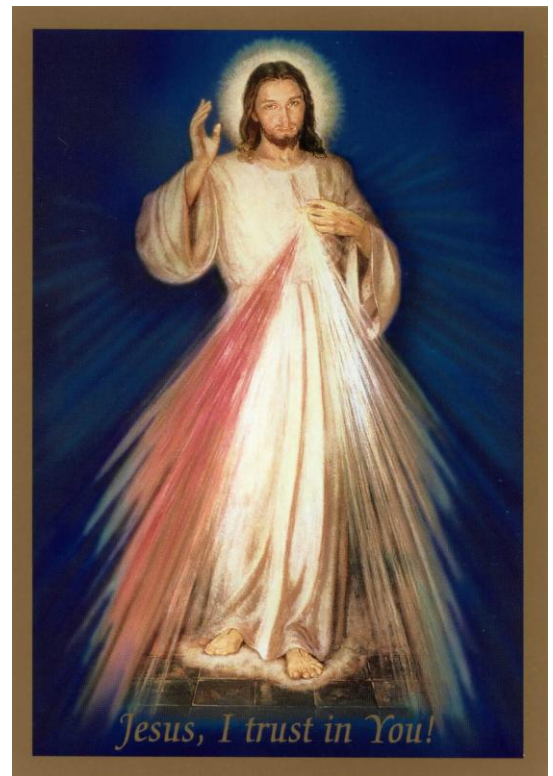
On October 5, 1938, a young religious by the name of **Sister Faustina** (Helen Kowalska) died in a convent of the Congregation of Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Cracow, Poland. She came from a very poor family that had struggled hard on their little farm during the terrible years of World

War I. Sister had had only three years of very simple education. Hers were the humblest tasks in the convent, usually in the kitchen or the vegetable garden, or as porter.

THE IMAGE

On February 22, 1931, Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ appeared to this simple nun, bringing with Him a wonderful message of Mercy for all humankind. Sister Faustina tells us in her diary under this date: *“In the evening, when I was in my cell, I became aware of the Lord Jesus clothed in a white garment One hand was raised in blessing, the other was touching the garment at the breast. From the opening in the garment at the breast there came forth two large rays, one red, and the other pale In silence I gazed intently at the Lord, my soul was overwhelmed with fear, but also with great joy After a while Jesus said to me ‘Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the inscription Jesus, I trust in You!’”*

Some time later, Our Lord again spoke to her: **“The pale ray stands for the Water which makes souls righteous; the red ray stands for the Blood which is the life of souls. These two rays issued forth from the depths of My most tender Mercy at that time when My agonizing Heart was opened by a lance on the Cross ... Fortunate is the one who will dwell in their shelter, for the just hand of God shall not lay hold on him.”**



DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

As a further sign of His forgiving love, Jesus called for a Feast of The Divine Mercy to be celebrated in the whole Church. The Second Sunday of Easter is now celebrated as Divine Mercy Sunday throughout the Church. He said to Sister Faustina: **“I want this image to be solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter; that Sunday is to be the Feast of Mercy. On that day, the depths of My Mercy will be open to all. Whoever will go to confession and Holy Communion on that day will receive complete forgiveness of sin and punishment. Mankind will not enjoy peace until it turns with confidence to My Mercy.”**

THE NOVENA

Jesus further asked that Divine Mercy Sunday be preceded by a Novena to The Divine Mercy which would begin on Good Friday. He gave her an intention to pray for on each day of the Novena, saving for the last day the most difficult intention of all, the lukewarm and indifferent of whom He said: **“These souls cause Me more suffering than any others; it was from such souls that My soul felt the most revulsion in the Garden of Olives. It was on their account that I said: ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass Me by.’ The last hope of salvation for them is to flee to My Mercy.”**

THE CHAPLET

In 1933, God gave Sister Faustina a striking vision of His Mercy. Sister tells us: *“I saw a great light, with God the Father in the midst of it. Between this light and the earth I saw Jesus nailed to the Cross and in such a way that God, wanting to look upon the earth, had to look through Our Lord’s wounds And I understood that God blessed the earth for the sake of Jesus.”* Of another vision on September 13, 1935, she writes: *“I saw an Angel, the executor of God’s wrath ... about to strike the earth I began to beg God earnestly for the world with words which I heard interiorly As I prayed in this way, I saw the Angel’s helplessness, and he could not carry out the just punishment*

The following day an inner voice taught her to say this prayer on ordinary rosary beads:

“First say one ‘Our Father,’ ‘Hail Mary,’ and ‘I believe.’

Then on the large beads say the following words ‘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 smaller beads you are to say the following words.

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

In conclusion you are to say these words three times.

‘Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.’”

Jesus said later to Sister Faustina: **“Say unceasingly this chaplet that I have taught you. Anyone who says it will receive great Mercy at the hour of death. Priests will recommend it to sinners as the last hope. Even the most hardened sinner, if he recites this chaplet even once, will receive grace from My infinite Mercy. I want the whole world to know My infinite Mercy. I want to give unimaginable graces to those who trust in My Mercy.”**

SUBSEQUENT HISTORY

One day in the same year, 1935, Sister Faustina wrote for her spiritual director: *“The time will come when this work, which God so commends, [will be] as though in complete ruin, and suddenly the action of God will come upon the scene with great power which will bear witness to the truth. It will be as a new splendor for the Church, though it has been dormant in it from long ago.”*

This indeed came to pass. On the 6th of March, 1959, the Holy See, acting on information that was inaccurately presented, prohibited **“the spreading of images and writings advocating devotion to the Divine Mercy in the form proposed by Sister Faustina.”** As a result, there followed almost twenty years of total silence. Then, on the 15th of April, 1978, the Holy See, after a thorough examination of original documents previously unavailable to it, completely reversed its decision and again permitted the devotion. The one man primarily responsible for this reversal of decision was Karol Cardinal Wojtyla, the Archbishop of Cracow. On October 16, 1978, he was elevated to the See of Peter as Pope John Paul II. On March 7, 1992, Sr. Faustina’s virtues were declared heroic; on December 21, 1992, a healing through Sr Faustina’s intercession was declared a miracle; on April 18, 1993, Pope John Paul II had the honor to declare the Venerable Servant of God Sister Faustina Blessed; and on April 30, 2000, Pope John Paul II canonized Blessed Faustina and also called for the celebration of the Second Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday throughout the Church.

A NOVENA TO OBTAIN GRACES THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF SAINT MARIA FAUSTINA

O Jesus, who filled Your handmaid Saint Faustina with profound veneration for Your boundless Mercy, deign. if it be Your holy will, to grant me, through her intercession, the grace for which I fervently pray

My sins render me unworthy of Your Mercy, but be mindful of Saint Faustina’s spirit of sacrifice and self-denial, and reward her virtue by granting the petition which, with childlike confidence, I present to You through her intercession. Amen

Saint Faustina, pray for us.