

Divine Mercy Prayer Book

*I trust in
your mercy*



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Divine Mercy Prayer Book

“I trust in Your Mercy!”

by
The Marian Fathers

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The Marian Fathers
Divine Mercy Apostolate

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Dedication

Souls who spread the honour of My mercy I shield through their entire lives as a tender mother her infant, and at the hour of death I will not be a Judge for them, but the Merciful Saviour. At that last hour, a soul has nothing with which to defend itself except My mercy. Happy is the soul that during its lifetime immersed itself in the Fountain of Mercy, because justice will have no hold on it. (*Diary*, 1075)

Introduction

The purpose of this Prayer book is to help you to discover the depth and richness of God's Mercy. The mystery of God who is rich in Mercy was fully manifested in Jesus Christ.

By the revelation given to the Polish nun, St Sister Maria Faustina Kowalska, (25th August 1905 - 5th October 1938) we are called to trust in God's Mercy, and to share and exercise it in daily life.

The years St Faustina spent at the convent of Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy were filled with extraordinary gifts, such as revelations, visions, hidden stigmata, participation in the Passion of the Lord, the gift of bilocation, the reading of human souls, the gift of prophecy, and the rare gift of mystical engagement and marriage. The living relationship with God, the Blessed Mother, the angels, the saints, the souls in Purgatory - with the entire supernatural world - was as equally real for her as was the world she perceived with her senses. In spite of being so richly endowed with extraordinary graces, St Faustina knew that they do not in fact constitute sanctity. In her *Diary* written on advice of her spiritual director - Blessed Fr Michael Sopocko, she wrote:

Neither graces, nor revelations, nor raptures, nor gifts granted to a soul make it perfect, but rather the intimate

union of the soul with God. These gifts are merely ornaments of the soul, but constitute neither its essence nor its perfection. My sanctity and perfection consist in the close union of my will with the will of God. (1107)

The message of the Divine Mercy is nothing new, just a reminder of what the Church has always taught: that God is merciful and forgiving and that we, too, must show mercy and forgiveness.

But, in the Divine Mercy devotion, the message takes on a powerful new focus, calling people to a deeper understanding that God's love is unlimited and available to everyone - especially the greatest sinners. As Jesus said to St Faustina:

The greater the sinner, the greater the right he has to My mercy (723).

Devotion to the Divine Mercy involves a total commitment to God as Mercy. It is a decision to accept His mercy with thanksgiving, to trust completely in Him, and to be merciful as He is merciful. The devotional practices proposed in the *Diary of St Faustina* and set forth in this Prayer Book are completely in accordance with the teaching of the Church and are firmly rooted in the Gospel message of our Merciful Saviour. Properly understood and implemented, they will help us grow as genuine followers of Christ.

There are two scriptural verses that we should keep in mind as we engage in these devotional practices:

1. "This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me" (*Is 29:13*);
2. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (*Mt 5:7*).

Which of these would you like to hear the Lord say about you? It's an ironic and somewhat frightening fact that many of the most religious people of Christ's time (people who were actively practicing their religion and eagerly awaiting the promised Messiah) were not able to recognise Him when He came.

The Pharisees, to whom Christ was speaking in the first quotation above, were very devoted to the prayers, rules, and rituals of their religion; but over the years, these outer observances had become so important in themselves that their real meaning had been lost. The Pharisees performed all the prescribed sacrifices, said all the right prayers, fasted regularly, and talked a lot about God, but none of it had touched their hearts. As a result, they had no real relationship with God, they were not living the way He wanted them to live, and they were not prepared for the coming of Jesus.

When we look at the Image of the Merciful Saviour, or pause for prayer at three o'clock, or pray the Chaplet - are these things drawing us closer to the real sacramental life of the Church and allowing Jesus to transform our hearts?

Or have they just become religious habits? In our daily lives are we growing more and more as people of mercy? Or are we just giving “lip service” to God’s mercy?

Asking for the Lord’s mercy, trusting in His mercy, and sincerely trying to live His mercy in our lives, we can be assured that we will never hear Him say of us, “Their hearts are far from Me,” but rather that wonderful promise, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”

It is our hope that you will make the prayers, attitudes, and practices presented in this Prayer Book a real part of your life. May you come to trust completely in God and live each day immersed in His merciful love - thus fulfilling the Lord’s command to let your light “shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven” (*Mt* 5:16).

Most of the prayers and meditations in this prayer book are based on the texts from *Diary of St Faustina*. The number following each quote refers to the appropriate paragraph numbers used in both the Polish and English editions of the Diary, *Divine Mercy in My Soul*. (*Diary of St Maria Faustina Kowalska*, Stockbridge, Mass. U.S.A. 2006, © Congregation of Marians.)

Marian Fathers

Catholic Prayers

Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory be to the Father

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit

and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

An Act of Contrition

O my God, I am sorry and beg pardon for all my sins, and detest them above all things, because they deserve your dreadful punishments, because they have crucified my loving Saviour Jesus Christ, and, most of all, because they offend your infinite goodness; and I firmly resolve, by the help of your grace, never to offend you again, and carefully to avoid the occasions of sin.

The Memorare

Remember, O most loving Virgin Mary, that it is a thing unheard of, that anyone ever had recourse to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession, and was left forsaken. Filled therefore with confidence in your goodness I fly to you, O Mother, Virgin of virgins. To you I come, before you I stand, a sorrowful sinner. Despise not my poor words, O Mother of the Word of God, but graciously hear and grant my prayer.

The Angelus

May be said morning, noon, and night, to put us in mind that God the Son became man for our salvation.

V. The Angel of the Lord declared to Mary:

R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary...

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord:

R. Be it done to me according to your word.

Hail Mary...

V. And the Word was made Flesh:


R. And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary...

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, your Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by his passion and cross  be brought to the glory of his resurrection, through the same Christ our Lord. **R.** Amen.

The Regina Caeli

V. O Queen of heaven, rejoice! Alleluia,

R. For he whom you did merit to bear, Alleluia,

V. Has risen as he said. Alleluia,

R. Pray for us to God. Alleluia,

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, Alleluia,

R. For the Lord has risen indeed, Alleluia.

Let us pray:

God our Father, you give joy to the world by the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Through the prayers of his mother, the Virgin Mary, bring us to the happiness of eternal life. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **R.** Amen.

The Hail Holy Queen

Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy; hail, our life, our sweetness, and our hope! To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy towards us; and after this our exile, show to us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

O God, whose only-begotten Son, by his life, death and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life; grant, we beseech you, that meditating on these Mysteries of the most holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin

Mary, we may both imitate what they contain, and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

The Litany to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

V. Lord, have mercy on us.

R. Christ, have mercy on us.

V. Lord, have mercy on us.

R. Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven, *have mercy on us (repeat).*

God the Son, Redeemer of the world.

God the Holy Spirit.

Holy Trinity, one God.

Heart of Jesus, Son of the Eternal Father.

Heart of Jesus, formed by the Holy Spirit in the Virgin
Mother's womb.

Heart of Jesus, substantially united to the Word of God.

Heart of Jesus, of infinite majesty.

Heart of Jesus, holy temple of God.

Heart of Jesus, tabernacle of the Most High.

Heart of Jesus, house of God and gate of heaven.

Heart of Jesus, glowing furnace of charity.

Heart of Jesus, vessel of justice and love.

Heart of Jesus, full of goodness and love.

Heart of Jesus, abyss of all virtues.

Heart of Jesus, most worthy of all praise.

Heart of Jesus, King and centre of all hearts.

Heart of Jesus, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom
and knowledge.

Heart of Jesus, in whom dwells all the fullness of the
Godhead.

Heart of Jesus, in whom the Father was well pleased.

Heart of Jesus, of whose fullness we have all received.

Heart of Jesus, desire of the everlasting hills.

Heart of Jesus, patient and rich in mercy.

Heart of Jesus, rich to all who call upon You.

Heart of Jesus, fount of life and holiness.

Heart of Jesus, propitiation for our offences.

Heart of Jesus, overwhelmed with reproaches.

Heart of Jesus, bruised for our iniquities.

Heart of Jesus, obedient even unto death.

Heart of Jesus, pierced with a lance.

Heart of Jesus, source of all consolation.

Heart of Jesus, our life and resurrection.

Heart of Jesus, our peace and reconciliation.

Heart of Jesus, victim for our sins.

Heart of Jesus, salvation of those who hope in You.

Heart of Jesus, hope of those who die in You.

Heart of Jesus, delight of all saints.

V. Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,

R. spare us, O Lord.

V. Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,

R. graciously hear us, O Lord.

V. Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,

R. have mercy on us.

V. Jesus, meek and humble of Heart,

R. make our hearts like unto Thine.

Let us pray:

Almighty and eternal God, look upon the Heart of Thy most beloved Son and upon the praises and satisfaction which He offers Thee in the name of sinners; and to those who implore Thy mercy, in Thy great goodness, grant forgiveness in the name of the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who lives and reigns with Thee forever and ever. **R.** Amen.

The Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

Christ hear us.

Christ graciously hear us.

God the Father of heaven,
have mercy on us. (repeat)

God the Son, Redeemer of
the world,

God the Holy Spirit,

Holy Trinity, one God,

Holy Mary,

pray for us. (repeat)

Holy Mother of God,

Holy Virgin of virgins,

Mother of Christ,

Mother of divine grace,

Mother most pure,

Mother most chaste,

Mother inviolate,

Mother undefiled,

Mother most lovable,

Mother most admirable,

Mother of good counsel,

Mother of our Creator,

Mother of our Saviour,
 Virgin most prudent,
 Virgin most venerable,
 Virgin most renowned,
 Virgin most powerful,
 Virgin most merciful,
 Virgin most faithful,
 Mirror of justice,
 Seat of wisdom,
 Cause of our joy,
 Spiritual vessel,
 Vessel of honour,
 Singular vessel of devotion,
 Mystical rose,
 Tower of David,
 Tower of ivory,
 House of gold,
 Ark of the covenant,
 Gate of heaven,

Morning Star,
 Health of the sick,
 Refuge of sinners,
 Comfort of the afflicted,
 Help of Christians,
 Queen of Angels,
 Queen of Patriarchs,
 Queen of Prophets,
 Queen of Apostles
 Queen of Martyrs,
 Queen of Confessors,
 Queen of Virgins,
 Queen of all Saints,
 Queen conceived
 without original sin,
 Queen assumed into heaven,
 Queen of the most
 holy Rosary,
 Queen of the Family.
 Queen of Peace,

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
Spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
Graciously hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us.

The Litany to St Joseph

Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

Christ hear us.

Christ graciously hear us.

God the Father of heaven,

have mercy on us. (repeat)

God the Son, Redeemer of
the world,

God the Holy Spirit,

Holy Trinity, one God,

Holy Mary,

pray for us. (repeat)

St Joseph,

Renowned offspring of

David,

Light of Patriarchs,

Spouse of the Mother of God,

Chaste guardian of the

Virgin,

Foster father of the Son

of God,

Diligent protector of Christ,

Head of the Holy Family,

Joseph most just,

Joseph most chaste,

Joseph most prudent,

Joseph most strong,

Joseph most obedient,

Joseph most faithful,

Mirror of patience,

Lover of poverty,

Model of artisans,

Glory of home life,

Guardian of virgins,

Pillar of families,

Solace of the wretched,

Hope of the sick,

Patron of the dying,

Terror of demons,

Protector of Holy Church,

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
Spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
Graciously hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us.

V. He made him the lord of his household.

R. And prince over all his possessions.

Let us pray:

O God, in your ineffable providence you were pleased to choose Blessed Joseph to be the spouse of your most holy Mother; grant, we beg you, that we may be worthy to have him for our intercessor in heaven whom on earth we venerate as our Protector: You who live and reign forever and ever. **R.** Amen.

The Litany to All Saints

Lord have mercy.	<i>have mercy on us. (repeat)</i>
<i>Lord have mercy.</i>	God the Son, Redeemer of
Christ have mercy.	the world,
<i>Christ have mercy.</i>	God the Holy Spirit,
Lord have mercy.	Holy Trinity, one God,
<i>Lord have mercy.</i>	Holy Mary,
Christ hear us.	<i>pray for us. (repeat)</i>
<i>Christ graciously hear us.</i>	Holy Mother of God,
God the Father of heaven,	Holy Virgin of virgins,

St Michael,
 St Gabriel,
 St Raphael,
 All you Holy Angels and
 Archangels,
 St John the Baptist,
 St Joseph,
 All you Holy Patriarchs
 and Prophets,
 St Peter,
 St Paul,
 St Andrew,
 St James,
 St John,
 St Thomas,
 St James,
 St Philip,
 St Bartholomew,
 St Matthew,
 St Simon,
 St Jude,
 St Matthias,
 St Barnabas,
 St Luke,
 St Mark,
 All you holy Apostles and
 Evangelists,

All you holy Disciples of
 the Lord,
 All you holy Innocents,
 St Stephen,
 St Lawrence,
 St Vincent,
 Ss Fabian and Sebastian,
 Ss John and Paul,
 Ss Cosmos and Damian,
 All you holy Martyrs,
 St Sylvester,
 St Gregory,
 St Ambrose,
 St Augustine,
 St Jerome,
 St Martin,
 St Nicholas,
 All you holy Bishops and
 Confessors,
 All you holy Doctors,
 St Anthony,
 St Benedict,
 St Bernard,
 St Dominic,
 St Francis,

All you holy Priests and
 Levites,
 All you holy Monks and
 Hermits,
 St Mary Magdalene,
 St Agatha,
 St Lucy,
 St Agnes,
 St Cecilia,
 St Anastasia,
 St Catherine,
 St Clare,
 All you holy Virgins and
 Widows,
 All you holy Saints of God,
 Lord, be merciful,
Lord save your people,
 (repeat)
 From all evil,
 From all sin,
 From your wrath,
 From a sudden and
 unprovided death,
 From the snares of the devil,
 From anger, hatred, and all
 ill-will,

From the spirit of
 uncleanness,
 From lightning and tempest,
 From the scourge of
 earthquake,
 From plague, famine, and
 war,
 From everlasting death,
 By the mystery of your
 holy Incarnation,
 By your Coming,
 By your Birth,
 By your Baptism and holy
 fasting,
 By your Cross and Passion,
 By your Death and Burial,
 By your holy Resurrection,
 By your wonderful
 Ascension,
 By the coming of the Holy
 Spirit,
 On the day of judgment,
 Be merciful to us sinners,
Lord, hear our prayer,
 (repeat)
 That you will spare us,
 That you will pardon us,

That it may please you to bring us to true penance,
Guide and protect your holy Church,
Preserve in holy religion the Pope, and all those in holy
Orders,

Humble the enemies of holy Church,
Give peace and unity to the whole Christian people,
Bring back to the unity of the Church all
those who are straying, and bring all
unbelievers to the light of the Gospel,

Strengthen and preserve us in your holy service,
Raise our minds to desire the things of heaven,
Reward all our benefactors with eternal blessings,
Deliver our souls from eternal damnation,
and the souls of our brethren, relatives,
and benefactors,

Give and preserve the fruits of the earth,
Grant eternal rest to all the faithful departed,
That it may please You to hear and heed
us, Jesus, Son of the Living God,

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
Spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
Graciously hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us,

Christ, graciously hear us
Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.
Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.

Message and Devotion to the Divine Mercy

Trust

Trust in Jesus is the essence of the message and devotion to the Divine Mercy. When we go to a public fountain, we can draw water from it as long as we have a vessel or container of some kind to put the water in. If our vessel is small, we can only bring back a little water; if it's large, we can bring back a lot. And anyone with a vessel can draw water from the fountain. The water is there for us, and no one is excluded. All we need is a vessel.

So it is with God's Mercy. In repeated revelations to St Faustina, Our Divine Saviour makes it clear that the fountain is His Heart, the water is His mercy, and the vessel is trust.

I have opened My Heart as a living fountain of mercy. Let all souls draw life from it. Let them approach this sea of mercy with great trust. (1520) 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. (327) The graces of My mercy are drawn by means of one vessel only, and that is - trust. The more a soul trusts, the more it will receive. (1578)

In the *Diary* of St Faustina, we hear Our Lord reminding us that we should depend upon His love... that He alone is worthy of our trust:

I never reject a contrite heart. (1485) Sooner would heaven and earth turn into nothingness than would My mercy not embrace a trusting soul. (1777)

But there is more to trust than just believing that God is trustworthy. We have to act upon that belief. Trust involves a turning back to God, a real conversion of our whole lives to God, repenting of our sins and forgiving others. Trust is a living faith. Trust means that we agree to let God be God, instead of trying to be God ourselves. (Trust is the antidote to the first sin of Adam!) It means that we agree that God can write the script of our lives, instead of insisting on our own script. It means that we agree with the great pledge we make in the Our Father: “Your will [not mine] be done on earth as it is in heaven.” It means that even in our moments of agony we agree with the cry of Jesus in the Garden, “Not my will, but Yours be done.” (*Lk 22:42*)

Mercy

In St Faustina’s *Diary*, Christ spoke to her about the importance of mercy - not just occasionally celebrating the feast, but living God’s Mercy in our lives:

My daughter, if I demand through you that people revere My mercy, you should be the first to distinguish

yourself by this confidence in My mercy. I demand from you deeds of mercy, which are to arise out of love for Me. You are to show mercy to your neighbours always and everywhere. You must not shrink from this or try to excuse or absolve yourself from it.

I am giving you three ways of exercising mercy toward your neighbour: the first - by deed, the second - by word, the third - by prayer. In these three degrees is contained the fullness of mercy, and it is an unquestionable proof of love for Me. By this means a soul glorifies and pays reverence to My mercy. Yes, the first Sunday after Easter is the Feast of Mercy, but there must also be acts of mercy, and I demand the worship of My mercy through the solemn celebration of the Feast and through the veneration of the image which is painted. By means of this image I shall grant many graces to souls. It is to be a reminder of the demands of My mercy, because even the strongest faith is of no avail without works. (742)

Later, St Faustina describes her understanding of Christ's words to her:

For there are three ways of performing an act of mercy: the merciful word, by forgiving and by comforting; secondly, if you can offer no word, then pray - that too is mercy; and thirdly, deeds of mercy. And when the Last Day comes, we shall be judged

from this, and on this basis we shall receive the eternal verdict. (1158)

God is Mercy itself, and we are called to practice the ABC's of mercy (Ask for His Mercy, Be merciful to others, Completely trust in Jesus). The trust in Jesus is the vital ingredient. We do not simply ask for mercy, nor do we simply try to be good to other people. We ask with complete trust, and Our Lord fills us with grace so that we can be merciful as our Heavenly Father is merciful.

On this foundation - Trust in God and mercy towards others - are based forms of the devotion to the Divine Mercy given by Jesus to Sister Faustina: The Feast of Mercy, The Image of the Merciful Jesus, The Chaplet, The Hour of Mercy and spreading the devotion to the Divine Mercy.

The Feast of the Divine Mercy (Divine Mercy Sunday)

Among all of the elements of devotion to the Divine Mercy requested by our Lord through St Faustina Kowalska, the Feast of Mercy holds first place. The Lord's will with regard to its establishment was already made known in His first revelation to the saint, as recorded in her Diary. In all, there were 14 revelations concerning the desired feast. The most comprehensive revelation can be found in *Diary* entry 699:

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

Our Lord's explicit desire is that this feast be celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter. This Sunday is designated in the liturgy as the Octave Day of Easter. It was officially called the Second Sunday of Easter after the liturgical reform of Vatican II. Now, by the Decree of the

Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, the name of this liturgical day has been changed to: Second Sunday of Easter, or Divine Mercy Sunday. Pope John Paul II made the surprise announcement of this change in his homily at the canonisation of St Faustina on 30th April, 2000. There, he declared: “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*.’”

By the words “the whole message,” Pope John Paul II was referring to the connection between the “Easter Mystery of the Redemption” - in other words, the suffering, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, followed by the sending of the Holy Spirit - and this Feast of Divine Mercy, the Octave Day of Easter, which fulfils the grace of atonement as lived through by Christ Jesus and offered to all who come to Him with trust.

Clearly, Divine Mercy Sunday is not a new feast established to celebrate St Faustina’s revelations. Indeed, it is not primarily about St Faustina at all - nor is it altogether a new feast! The title “Divine Mercy Sunday” does highlight and amplify the meaning of the day. In this way, it recovers an ancient liturgical tradition, reflected in a teaching attributed to St Augustine about the Easter Octave, which he called “the days of mercy and pardon,” and the Octave Day itself “the compendium of the days of mercy.”

Liturgically the Easter Octave has always been centered on the theme of Divine Mercy and forgiveness. Divine Mercy Sunday, therefore, point us to the merciful love of God that lies behind the whole Paschal Mystery - the whole mystery of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ - made present for us in the Eucharist. In this way, it also sums up the whole Easter Octave. As Pope John Paul II pointed out in his *Regina Caeli* address on Divine Mercy Sunday, 1995: “the whole Octave of Easter is like a single day,” and the Octave Sunday is meant to be the day of “thanksgiving for the goodness God has shown to man in the whole Easter mystery.”

Given the liturgical appropriateness of the title “Divine Mercy Sunday” for the Octave Day of Easter, therefore, the Holy See did not give this title to the Second Sunday of Easter merely as an “option,” for those dioceses who happen to like that sort of thing! Rather, the decree issued on 5th May, 2000, by the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments clearly states: “the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II has graciously determined that in the Roman Missal, after the title Second Sunday of Easter, there shall henceforth be added the appellation ‘or [that is] Divine Mercy Sunday’ ...”.

How to prepare to and celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday

Jesus asked Sr Faustina to pray the special novena as a preparation to the Feast of the Divine Mercy:

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. (1209)

The novena to the Divine Mercy (*see p.61*) is typically nine days of prayer with a specific Intention for each day and followed by the Chaplet. The Chaplet can be said anytime, but the Lord specifically asked that it be recited as a novena. He promised:

By this Novena (of Chaplets), I will grant every possible grace to souls. (796)

Thus, to fittingly observe the Feast of Mercy, we should:

1. Celebrate the Feast on the Sunday after Easter;
2. Sincerely repent of all our sins;
3. Place our complete trust in Jesus;
4. Go to confession, preferably before that Sunday;
5. Receive Holy Communion on the day of the Feast;
6. Venerate the Image of the Divine Mercy;
7. Be merciful to others, through our actions, words, and prayers on their behalf.

The Image of the Merciful Jesus

In 1931, our Lord appeared to St Faustina in a vision. She saw Jesus clothed in a white garment with His right hand raised in blessing. His left hand was touching His

garment in the area of the Heart, from where two large rays came forth, one red and the other pale. She gazed intently at the Lord in silence, her soul filled with awe, but also with great joy. Jesus said to her:

Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You... I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over [its] enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I Myself will defend it as My own glory. (47, 48) 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 (327). I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel, and [then] throughout the world. (47)

At the request of her spiritual director, St Faustina asked the Lord about the meaning of the rays in the image. She heard these words in reply:

The two rays denote Blood and Water. 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 tender mercy when My agonized Heart was opened by a lance on the Cross... Happy is the one who will dwell in their shelter, for the just hand of God shall not lay hold of him. (299) By means of this image I shall grant

many graces to souls. It is to be a reminder of the demands of My mercy, because even the strongest faith is of no avail without works. (742)

These words indicate that the Image represents the graces of Divine Mercy poured out upon the world, especially through Baptism and the Eucharist.

Many different versions of this image have been painted, but our Lord made it clear that the painting itself is not what is important. When St Faustina first saw the original image that was being painted under her direction by Eugeniusz Kazimirowski in Vilnius in 1934, she wept in disappointment and complained to Jesus: Who will paint You as beautiful as You are? (313). In answer, she heard these words:

Not in the beauty of the colour, nor of the brush lies the greatness of this image, but in My grace. (313)

So no matter which version of the Image we prefer, we can be assured that it is a vehicle of God's grace, if it is revered with trust in His mercy.

The Chaplet to the Divine Mercy

In 1935, St Faustina received a vision of an angel sent by God to chastise a certain city. She began to pray for mercy, but her prayers were powerless. Suddenly she saw the Holy Trinity and felt the power of Jesus' grace within

her. At the same time she found herself pleading with God for mercy with words she heard interiorly:

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; for the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us. (475)

As she continued saying this inspired prayer, the angel became helpless and could not carry out the deserved punishment (see 474). The next day, as she was entering the chapel, she again heard this interior voice, instructing her how to recite the prayer that our Lord later called “the Chaplet.” This time, after “have mercy on us” were added the words “and on the whole world” (476). From then on, she recited this form of prayer almost constantly, offering it especially for the dying.

In subsequent revelations, the Lord made it clear that the Chaplet (*see p.60*) was not just for her, but for the whole world. He also attached extraordinary promises to its recitation:

Encourage souls to say the Chaplet which I have given you... (1541) Whoever will recite it will receive great mercy at the hour of death. (687) When they say this Chaplet in the presence of the dying, I will stand between My Father and the dying person, not as the just Judge but as the Merciful Saviour. (1541) Priests

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