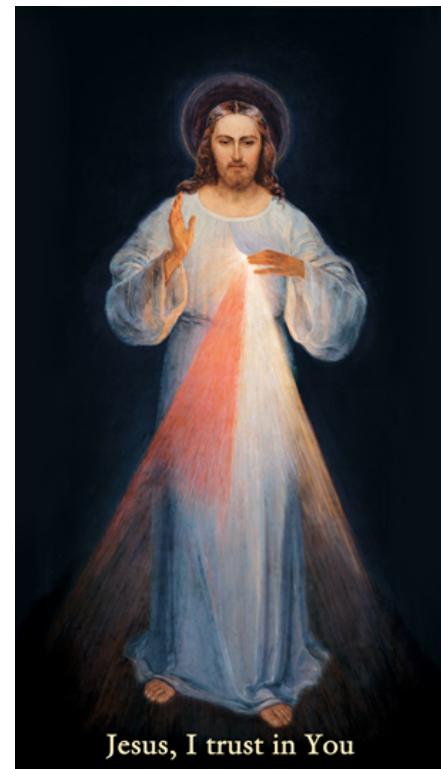


THIS SUNDAY (APRIL 11) is DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY!

How to celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday:

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



WHAT IS DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY?

Among all of the elements of devotion to The Divine Mercy requested by our Lord through St. Faustina, the Feast of Mercy holds first place.

"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

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 of St Faustina #699

Feast of Mercy

The "First Sunday after Easter, which is designated in "The Liturgy of the Hours and the Celebration of the Eucharist" as "Octave Day of the Easter" ,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 of Divine Mercy."

St. John Paul II made the surprise announcement of this change in his homily at the canonization of St. Faustina on April 30, 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," the Holy Father was referring to the strict connection between the "Easter Mystery of the Redemption" 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.

In this regard, the Holy Father also said, citing the Responsorial Psalm of the Liturgy, "The Church sings ... , as if receiving from Christ's lips these words of the Psalm" [that is, Give thanks to the Lord for He is good; His steadfast love (=mercy) endures forever, Ps 118:1].

And then, the Holy Father developed the connection further: "[This comes] 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).

By what the Holy Father continued to say, it becomes clear why Jesus insisted that the sacred image of Himself as The Divine Mercy

is to be venerated throughout the world in connection with the observance of this Sunday (see Diary, 49, 88, 299, 341, 570, 742).

St. John Paul II said: "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.

"Divine Mercy reaches human beings through the Heart of Christ crucified: 'Tell, My daughter, [all people] that I am Love and Mercy itself [personified]' Jesus told St. 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. Rich in Mercy, 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 most immense capacity for forgiveness?"

From this teaching of the Holy Father on that most solemn occasion of his "presenting the life and witness of St. Faustina Kowalska to the whole Church as a gift of God to our time," it can be deduced that the most opportune time, the most proper one, for the solemn honoring of The Divine Mercy falls immediately after the Paschal Feast of Easter, recalling the attaining of our Redemption.

St. Augustine (in the 400's AD, way before St. Faustina) called the eight days of Easter (which the Church liturgically considers as

constituting a single day ,the day of the new creation) "days of mercy and pardon." He calls the Sunday of this Paschal Octave (which our Lord insisted with St. Faustina is the Feast of Mercy [Diary, 88]) "the summary of the days of mercy" (Sermon 156, Dom. In Albis).

NOVENA OF DIVINE MERCY

In fact, Jesus Himself dictated the intentions for each day of the novena which starts on Good Friday and He desired to be celebrated as a preparation for the solemn observance of this feast.

VENERATION OF THE IMAGE

The image of Jesus, The Divine Mercy, is to have a special place of honor on the Feast of Mercy, a visual reminder of all that Jesus did for us through His Passion, Death, and Resurrection ... and a reminder, too, of what He asks of us in return to trust Him and be merciful to others:

"I want the image to be solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter, and I want it to be venerated publicly so that every soul may know about it" (341).

CONFESSON & HOLY COMMUNION

– the Special Promise of Mercy

Our Lord's promise to grant complete forgiveness of sins and punishment on the Feast of Mercy is recorded three times in the Diary of Saint Faustina, each time in a slightly different way:

"I want to grant a complete pardon to the souls that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion on the Feast of My mercy" (1109).

"Whoever approaches the Fountain of Life

on this day will be granted complete forgiveness of sins and punishment" (Diary 300).

"The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion will obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment" (Diary 699).

EXTRAORDINARY GRACES

Our Lord is emphasizing, through this promise, the infinite value of Confession and Communion as miracles of mercy. He wants us to realize that since the Eucharist is His own Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, it is the "Fountain of Life" (Diary 300).

The Eucharist is Jesus, Himself, the Living God, longing to pour Himself as Mercy into our hearts.

Why would Our Lord feel the need to emphasize this? Because so many people do not really understand it. They either see no need to receive Holy Communion, or they receive it simply out of habit. As St. Paul explains in his letter to the Corinthians, they eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, "without recognizing the body of the Lord" (I Cor 11:27-29).

In His revelations to Saint Faustina, Our Lord makes it very clear what He is offering us in Holy Communion and how much it hurts Him when we treat His presence with indifference:

"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) ...

"It pains Me very much when religious souls receive the Sacrament of Love merely out of habit, as if they did not distinguish this food. I find neither faith nor love in their hearts. I go to such souls with great reluctance. It would be better if they did not receive Me" (Diary 1288) ...

"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 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. In order that you may know at least some of My pain imagine the most tender of mothers who has great love for her children, while those children spurn her love. Consider her pain. No one is in a position to console her. This is but a feeble image and likeness of My love" (Diary 1447).

So, Our Lord's promise of complete forgiveness is both a reminder and a call. It is a reminder that He is truly present and truly alive in the Eucharist, filled with love for us and waiting for us to turn to Him with trust. And it is a call for us all to be washed clean in His Love through Confession and Holy Communion - no matter how terrible our sins - and begin our lives again. He is offering us a new start.

Prepare Yourself Properly for Divine Mercy Sunday

Going to Confession is not the only way we should prepare ourselves for Divine Mercy Sunday. As Cardinal Francis Macharski, Archbishop of Krakow, Poland explains in a 1985 pastoral letter, we are not simply called to ask for God's (back) mercy with trust. We are also called to be merciful:

"Our own merciful attitude is likewise a preparation. Without deeds of mercy our devotion would not be real. For Christ does not only reveal the mercy of God, but at the same time He places before people the demand that they conduct themselves in life with love and mercy. The Holy Father states that this requirement constitutes the very heart of the Gospel ethos (Rich in Mercy, 3) it is the commandment of love and the promise: 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy' (Mt 5:7). Let it be a mercy that is forgiving and true, and universal, with good words, deeds, and prayer for others!"

Our Lord's words to Saint Faustina about this requirement to be merciful are very strong and leave no room for misinterpretation:

"Yes, the first Sunday after Easter is the Feast of Mercy, but there must also be acts of mercy ... I demand from you deeds of mercy, which are to arise out of love for Me. You are to show mercy to your neighbors always and everywhere. You must not shrink from this or try to excuse or absolve yourself from it" (Diary 742)

Extracts from
<http://www.divinemercysunday.com>

The Eight Day (Octave), the Greatest Day, Divine Mercy

Sunday

The name “octave” has been given to the eight day period after a liturgical feast. This eighth day of the feast is considered as a recurrence of the first day. Each Sunday throughout the year is known as the “eight day” - a recurrence of the Feast of the Resurrection. The Octave day can be considered as the “greatest day” of the Feast itself. This practice of observing the octave day as the greatest day of the feast is rooted in Jewish celebration. For example the dedication of Solomon’s Temple and the annual Feast of Tabernacles. We read in the 7 chapter in Saint John’s Gospel:

On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood up and cried out, “if anyone thirsts, let him come to Me; let him drink who believes in Me.”
(Jn 7:37-38)

What is the Octave day of Easter?

Divine Mercy Sunday (Feast of Mercy), the Second Sunday of Easter (Back)

“the greatest day”. We need to take the time to consider the meaning of these things and the connection that exist among them. We must enter into this



Easter Sunday celebration knowing that the greatest day of this Feast is the celebration of God’s Mercy.

One of the greatest Doctors of the Church, St Gregory of Nazianzen, also supports this feast, declaring that **the Octave Day of Easter is even a greater feast than Easter** - though it takes nothing away from the greatness of the Day of Resurrection itself. Easter Sunday is the boundary between death and life (a creation). But its eighth day,

the Octave, is the **Fulfillment of what Easter is all about**- perfect life in eternity (a second creation, more admirable and more sublime than the first).

What good is it to put these days on our calendars and call them “great feasts” if their meaning is not realized in our lives? We must understand them and rejoice and celebrate what our Lord has given us through His church.

When Jesus revealed the Sacred Image of Himself as The Divine Mercy to St. Faustina on February 22, 1931, He declared:

“I desire that there be a Feast of Mercy. I want this image, which you will paint with a brush, to be solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter (the eighth day, octave of the Resurrection of our Lord) that Sunday is to be the Feast of Mercy.”

(Diary, 49)

One day while St. Faustina was offering all her sufferings and prayers for the establishment of this Feast, she said to our Lord: “They tell me that there is already such a feast and so why should I talk about it?”

Our Lord Speaks:

“And who knows anything about this feast? No one! Even those who should be proclaiming My mercy and

teaching people about it often do not know about it themselves. That is why I want the image to be solemnly blessed on the First Sunday after Easter, and want it to be venerated publicly so that every soul may know about it.” (Diary, 340)

From: **Life and Mercy Messenger**

Divine Mercy Sunday: What's This Feast All About, Anyway?

By Dr. Robert Stackpole, STD

To put on a great banquet for one's friends, the first step is to send out proper invitations. The invitations must say WHY the banquet is being held, WHEN it will take place, WHO is invited, and WHAT TO EXPECT (such as cocktails on the lawn, followed by a buffet meal).



In fact, the *Diary of St. Faustina* is filled with invitations from our Lord Jesus Christ to celebrate with Him the great Feast of The Divine Mercy. This year, we celebrate this Feast on Sunday, April 11. In numerous passages, Jesus spelled out for her "why," "when," "who," and "what to expect" at this special banquet.

First, why did Jesus ask the Church, through St. Faustina, to institute the Feast of Mercy? As recorded in *Diary* entry 965, Jesus said to Faustina:

"Souls perish in spite of My bitter Passion. I am giving them ... the Feast of My mercy. If they will not adore My mercy, they will perish for all eternity. Secretary of My mercy, write, tell souls about this great mercy of Mine, because the awful day, the day of My justice is near."

In short, the main reason that Jesus wanted this Feast to be established is that He wanted to "throw a lifeline," so to speak, to souls who are perishing, (Back) souls who are drowning in sin and despair. That lifeline is this Feast, with all the tremendous promises of graces and benefits which Jesus attached to it. As He said to St. Faustina, He wanted to make this Feast day a special "refuge and shelter" for the "consolation" of souls. In *Diary* entry 1517, Jesus said: "the Feast of My Mercy has issued forth from My very depths for the consolation of the whole world." In short, Jesus gave us this Feast as both a comfort and a lifeline for souls.

Second, "when" is this Feast to be celebrated? The answer was given directly to St. Faustina on numerous occasions. For example, in *Diary* entry 299, Jesus said to her: "I desire that the First Sunday after Easter be the Feast of Mercy." Today that Sunday is called in the Roman Missal "The Second Sunday of Easter, or Divine Mercy Sunday."

Third, in order to discover "who" is invited to this great Feast, and what kind of spiritual "banquet" our Lord wants to spread for us on that day, we need to consult *Diary* entry 699, in which Jesus spells out in detail the meaning of this feast day, and the comforting promises He attached to it. Jesus said to St. Faustina:

"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."

From these words of our Lord, it should be clear who is invited to the Feast of Mercy. He states clearly: "I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls" — that is, for all penitent souls without exception — but "especially" for "poor sinners." So the special guests at the Feast of Mercy — the guests who will receive the most attention — are poor sinners, those who are most in need of His mercy.

This means, of course, that this banquet is spread especially for poor sinners who *know in truth* that they are poor sinners. It is only *repentant* sinners who will be able to receive all the graces offered by Jesus on this special day. That is why Jesus asks us to prepare for this feast day by making a good confession. Just as in Christ's parable

of the Pharisee and the Publican it was the publican who went away from his prayers "justified," for he had come before the Lord with nothing but a simple cry from his heart for mercy: "Lord have mercy on me, a sinner!" (Lk 18:9-14).

The Feast of Mercy is especially for souls like that, souls open to receive Christ's forgiveness and grace because they know that they need it so badly. This Feast is for the lost, that they might be found, and for those struggling to grow in faith, hope, and love, that they might be refreshed and strengthened. On the other hand, those who believe that they have no need of divine mercy will not be able to receive mercy on that day. They are like the Pharisee in the parable: God cannot fill them with His grace, because they are already full of *themselves*!

Then what are the graces and benefits that our Lord wants to spread out before us on Mercy Sunday? Again, Jesus said to St. Faustina (*Diary*, 699):

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 are open all the divine floodgates through which graces flow.

What Jesus is offering to us here is a complete renewal of baptismal grace, a complete cleansing of the soul and washing it clean, renewing within us all the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit that we received at our baptism.

Of course, it is certainly true that whenever we make a good Confession out of perfect contrition for sin and pure love for God, we can receive the same complete renewal of baptismal grace, the same complete cleansing of our souls that Jesus promised we could receive from Holy Communion on the Feast of Mercy.

The problem is: How many of us make our Confessions as an act of perfect contrition and pure love of God? Unless we are well on the road to sanctity, it is very rare that we are able to do this. Nevertheless, Jesus is so generous and merciful toward us that on Mercy Sunday, He has given us another way to attain the complete refreshment of our souls in grace. If only we make a sincere confession in preparation for the Feast, and then receive Holy Communion on that day with trust in His divine mercy, we can receive the same complete spiritual renewal.

He does not ask of us an act of perfect love of God, or perfect contrition on that day in order that we may receive such a gift. All He asks is that we come to Him with *trust* (*Diary* entry 1578): "The graces of My mercy are drawn by the means of one vessel only, and that is - trust. The more a soul trusts, the more it will receive."

Trust is a combination of "faith" (the acceptance of all that God has revealed through Christ and His Church), "hope" (confidence in His promises of forgiveness, the help of His grace, and eternal life), "humility" (relying on God rather than ourselves (Back) for strength, guidance, and salvation) and merely imperfect "love" (clinging to Christ because of His promised benefits).

The renewal of baptismal grace that we receive from the Holy Communion on Mercy Sunday serves to strengthen us in all these virtues, but especially in our love for Jesus Christ, so that we begin (Back)

to love Him for His own sake — for the glory of His name, the spread of His kingdom, and for the consolation of His Heart — and not just for ourselves, for our own benefit. In short, by trust we open the door to Christ so that He can pour out upon us a whole ocean of graces on Mercy Sunday!

Jesus left several instructions with St. Faustina concerning how this Feast of Mercy should be observed. As we have already seen, Jesus asked that the Feast be observed on the Sunday after Easter; He asked us to come to Him in Holy Communion on that day with complete trust in His mercy; He said that we should make a good Confession in preparation for this Feast (St. Faustina made her confession on the day before Mercy Sunday — see *Diary* entry 1072). Finally, we are to receive Holy Communion on the Feast day itself in order to receive the complete renewal of baptismal grace that He wants to pour into our hearts.

Jesus also left three more instructions for St. Faustina that must not be forgotten.

First, He wanted priests to proclaim clearly the message of Divine Mercy on Mercy Sunday. *Diary* entry 570: "On that day, priests are to tell everyone about My great and unfathomable mercy." *Diary* entry 1521: "... Hardened sinners will repent on hearing their words when they speak about My unfathomable mercy, about the compassion I have for them in My Heart."

By His providential design, our Lord has already given a helping hand to priests to carry out His plan for Mercy Sunday. The fact is that the traditional texts of the Missal for that Sunday already proclaim His Mercy loud and clear. For example, there is the gospel reading about Jesus appearing in the upper room on Easter Sunday night, bestowing a blessing of peace on His apostles, and giving them authority to forgive sins in His name. The epistle is taken from the first chapter of I Peter: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in His great mercy has given us a new birth as His sons, by raising Jesus Christ from the dead." Even the opening prayer for the Mass begins with the words "God of mercy. ..."

Second, Jesus asked that the Image of The Divine Mercy be publicly venerated on this Feast day. In *Diary* entry 341, for example, Jesus said to St. Faustina: "... I want the image to be solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter, and I want it to be venerated publicly so that every soul may know about it."

To "venerate" a sacred image or statue simply means to perform some act, or make some gesture of deep religious respect toward it because of the person whom it represents: in this case, our most merciful Savior. A parish might venerate the image by having prayers to the merciful Jesus said before it, and/or placing flowers before it and putting it on view in a position of prominence in the sanctuary, and/or by censing the image (i.e., using incense), honoring the image along with the altar and sacred vessels during the liturgy.

It should come as no surprise that Jesus wanted this image to be venerated on Divine Mercy Sunday. After all, the Image of The Divine Mercy sums up the whole devotion to God's mercy in one picture. It depicts His merciful love for us both in His Passion (in the Blood and Water flowing from His breast, as it did on Calvary) and in the Resurrection — the whole Paschal mystery. Also, in the inscription at the bottom of the image, we find a summary of the basic response that Jesus asks of each of us to His merciful love: "Jesus, I trust in You."

In short, our Lord not only wants His priests to proclaim the message of Divine Mercy in words on that day; He also wants the message to be proclaimed through a sacred image - a visual aid, so to speak — because He knows well the truth of what we commonly say: "A picture is worth a thousand words."

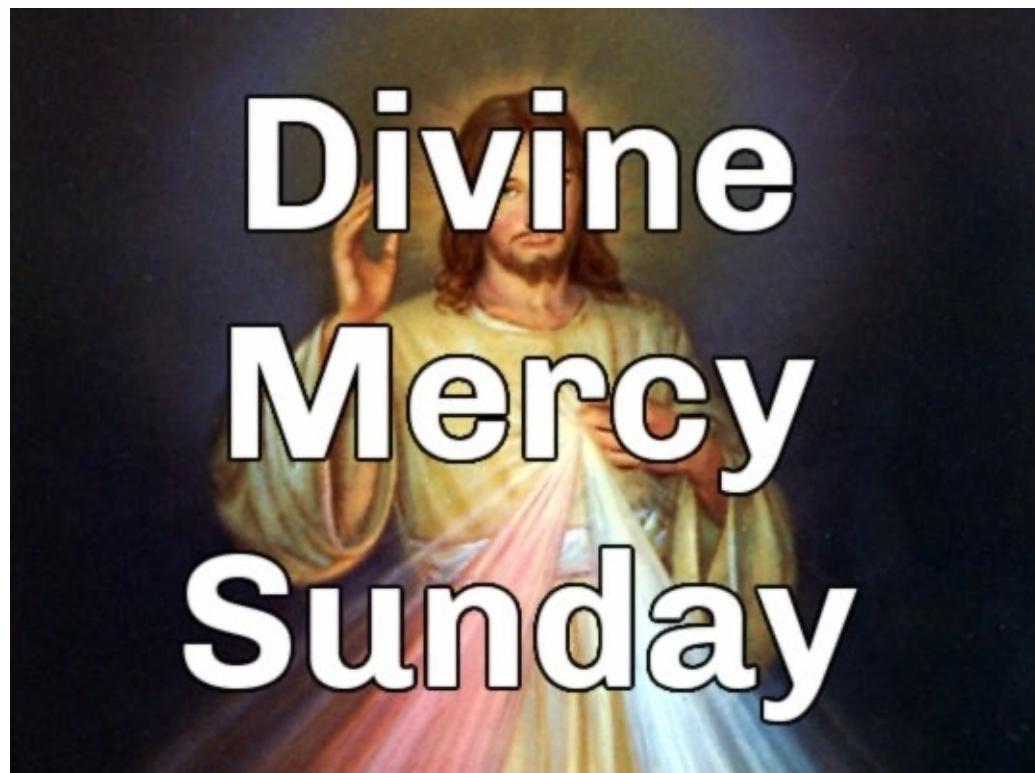
Finally, Jesus made it very clear to St. Faustina that in preparation for the Feast of Mercy we need to be merciful to others, through our actions, words, and prayers. If we are not practicing the works of mercy in our lives, then our celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday would be a kind of blasphemy, rather than an offering pleasing to the Lord (Mic 6:6-8):

With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old...? He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

This requirement is simple enough to understand. Jesus Himself repeated it to His disciples (Lk 6:36): "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful." He taught St. Faustina much the same thing, in connection with the Feast of Mercy (*Diary*, 742)

UNDERSTANDING DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Our Lord said to Saint Faustina: *"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 graces flow are opened." (Diary, 699).

This is the day the Lord has made!

This is the day of Atonement described in the Old Testament (Lev 16 and Sirach 50). But now the Blood of Jesus is sprinkled on the mercy seat. Now Jesus, the scapegoat and lamb of God, has taken our sins. Now we are cleansed in the blood of Jesus!

This is the day of the covenant.

On the eighth day of resurrection, the octave day, we celebrate God's solemn commitment, His covenant of merciful love. We ratify the covenant of mercy by receiving the Body and Blood, soul and divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

This is the day we celebrate God's mercy!

His mercy is infinite! His mercy is greater than sin, than evil, than suffering, than death! In His mercy we have victory, salvation and eternal life.

This is the day of mercy!

A day to turn to the Lord and plunge ourselves into the infinite ocean of His mercy. Today is the day to immerse our family and friends into the ocean of mercy by our prayers for them. Today is the day to tell Jesus we love Him and give our lives to Him and say that we trust Him. Today and everyday we cry out to Him: Jesus, I Trust in You!

This is the day of mercy!

Even if our sins be as red as scarlet, they will be made white as wool if we but turn to His infinite mercy and trust Him. Today is the great day of atonement. He is waiting for us with a heart burning with love and mercy, ready to forgive and to embrace us - if we but take the step to turn to Him and cry: "Jesus! Mercy! Jesus, I Trust in You!"

How do we celebrate the Feast of Mercy

It was clarified by the words of Our Lord to Saint Faustina:

1. We are to prepare with a novena of chaplets starting on Good Friday
2. We are to be purified by the "Tribunal of mercy," the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
3. We are to venerate the sacred image of the merciful Savior by gazing upon it as a reminder to trust Jesus and be merciful.
4. We are to perform some works of mercy to others.
5. We are to seal and ratify the covenant of mercy by receiving Holy Communion!

This is a day of new purification, new beginnings, like a new baptism.

Why is there a day set for Divine Mercy Sunday?

Because **this** is the time for mercy - before the time of judgment! Our Lord told Saint Faustina:

"Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the fount of My mercy." (Diary 300, 699).

We read in Acts 2:17-2 1, "In the last days," God said, "I will pour out My Holy Spirit upon all mankind, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men dream dreams. Yes, the Holy Spirit shall come upon all My servants, men and women alike, and they shall prophesy. And I will cause strange demonstrations in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and clouds of smoke, the sun shall turn black and the moon blood-red before that awesome day The Lord arrives. **But anyone who asks for mercy from The Lord shall have it and be saved.**"

Preparing for the Second Coming.

Our Lord makes it very clear Saint Faustina that this need to proclaim His message of mercy is urgent, because the world needs it as a preparation for His coming again: "Speak to the world about My mercy.... It is a sign for the end time. After it will come the Day of Justice...." (Diary 848) "You will prepare the world for My final coming... " (Diary 429) "Tell souls about this great mercy of Mine, because the awful day, the day of My justice, is near." (Diary 965)

Repeatedly the Lord tells Saint Faustina that He is offering sinners the "last hope of salvation." No matter how great our sins, He wants us to come back to Him, but we must respond now, while it is still the time of mercy: "Before the Day of Justice, I am sending the Day of Mercy... " (Diary 1588) "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)

"While there is still time, let them have recourse to the fount of My mercy...." (Diary 848) "He who refuses to pass through the door of My mercy must pass through the door of My justice." (Diary 1146)

The Chaplet.

Our Lord Himself gave us the Chaplet through Saint Faustina, and He made it clear to her that it was for the whole world. He also attached extraordinary promises to its recitation. He said, "Encourage souls to say the Chaplet which I have given you... Whoever will recite it will receive great mercy at the hour of death... 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 Savior... Priests will recommend it to sinners as their last hope of salvation. Even if there were a sinner most hardened, if he were to recite this Chaplet only once, he would receive grace from My infinite mercy... I desire to grant unimaginable graces to souls who trust in My mercy.. Through the Chaplet you will obtain everything, if what you ask for is compatible with My will."

The Hour of Mercy.

Our Lord asked for special prayer and meditation on His passion each afternoon at the three o'clock hour, the hour that recalls His death on the cross. Our Lord said, "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.. In this hour I will refuse nothing to the soul that makes a request of Me in virtue of My passion. 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. Immerse yourself in prayer there where you happen to be, if only for a very brief instant."

The Image.

In 1931 Our Lord granted a vision to Saint Faustina with two rays emanating from His heart, one red and the other pale.

As she gazed intently at Him, He 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 ... I am offering people a vessel with which they are to keep coming for graces to the fountain of mercy ... I desire that this image be venerated throughout the world. By means of this image I shall grant many graces to souls. I want this image to be Blessed on the first Sunday after Easter, the eighth, or octave day of the resurrection: that Sunday is to be the Feast of Mercy. 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 very depths of My tender mercy when My agonized Heart was opened by a lance on the cross. These rays shield souls from the wrath of My Father. Happy is the one who will dwell in their shelter, for the just hand of God shall not lay hold of Him."

Remember **the message of Mercy with ABC's.**

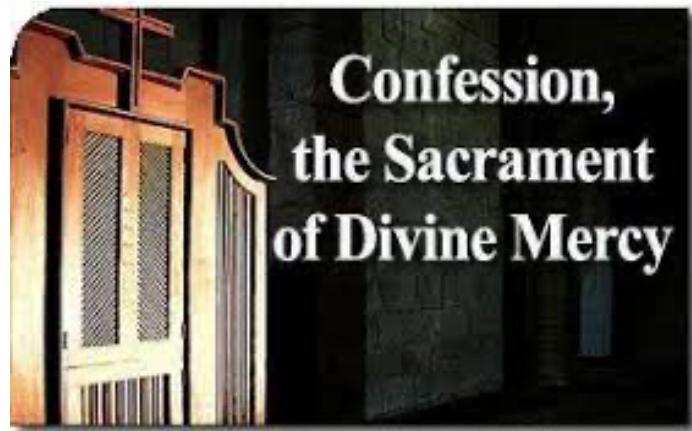
- A. Ask for His mercy.
- B. Be merciful.
- C. Completely trust in Jesus

HOW TO CELEBRATE DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

The Miracle of Mercy, The Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saint Faustina's mission in heaven is to share the great news of Divine Mercy with souls that are in misery

“I feel certain that my mission will not come to an end upon my death, but will begin. O doubting souls, I will draw aside for you the veils of heaven to convince you of God’s goodness, so that you will no longer continue to wound with your distrust the sweetest heart of Jesus. God is love and mercy.” (Diary 281)



So, how can we live this merciful way?

In our misery, we must plunge into the infinite ocean of God’s mercy with complete trust in Jesus. When doubts assail me, I can pray unceasingly, “Jesus, I Trust in You!” I can decide to nestle close to the merciful heart of Jesus. (Diary 1726)

Our Lord Speaks:

“I am love and mercy itself” (Diary 1074)... “Let no soul fear to draw near to me, even though its sins be as scarlet” (Diary 699)... “My mercy is greater than your sins and those of the entire world” (Diary 1485)... “Sooner would heaven and earth turn into nothingness than would My mercy not embrace a trusting soul” (Diary 1777)... “The greater the sinner, the greater the right he has to my mercy.” (Diary 723).

God is trying to tell us that we are wounded by sin and He wants us to be healed. He wants us to put trust in Him.
[L] [SEP]**The Miracle of Mercy, the Sacrament of Reconciliation**

When we sin, we start pulling away from grace. First with venial sins, we slowly move away from our Baptismal promise, and then mortal sins put a total separation, a wall between us and our Redeemer. We start to tell the Lord, “It’s my will now, not yours.” But, through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we renew our Baptismal vows. We once again proclaim Christ, Lord of our Life and not Satan. We open up the door we closed on Him and tell Him we would like a personal relationship with Him.

“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” And when He had

said this, He breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.” (John 20: 22-23)

When Jesus died on the cross, He forgave all our sins. When we are baptized, we are baptized into Christ and cleansed white as snow. We accept His mercy and cast all of our sins on Him, but through life we fail and we sin again. We become doubting souls and we doubt His merciful cross. We doubt that He took our sins away. Priests confirm God’s mercy to us in the confessional, but then He pronounces the words of absolution of His cross at Calvary which was given to us two thousand years ago. God lives in the eternal now, these graces from His cross are being blasted back and forth in time. In the confessional you may see the priest, but it is actually Christ offering His cross to us and letting us know again and again that we are forgiven, for He took our sins away. But, we become doubting souls, we must be with Jesus so we can hear His words, “Your sins are forgiven,” which comes through the priest’s mouth.

Our Lord’s Words to Faustina

Our Lord Speaks:

“When you go to Confession, to this fountain of mercy, the blood and water which came forth from My heart always flows down upon your soul (Diary 1602)... In the tribunal of mercy [The Sacrament of Reconciliation]... the greatest miracles take place and are incessantly repeated (Diary 1448)... Here the misery of the soul meets the God of mercy (Diary 1602)... Come with faith to the feet of My representative (Diary 1448)... I, Myself, am waiting there for you. I am only hidden by the priest...”

I, Myself, act in your soul (Diary 1602)... 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).

Our Lord Speaks:

“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 Di- vine Mercy restores that soul in full... From this fountain of mercy, souls draw graces solely with the vessel of trust. If their trust is great, there is no limit to My generosity” (Diary 1448).

*By showing the importance of confession Our Lord made it necessary for obtaining His promise of complete forgiveness of sins and punishment for observing the Feast of Mercy. From ***Life and Mercy Messenger****

