

The Divine Mercy Sunday

Our late Pope St. John Paul II, understanding the great mercy and love of the Heavenly Father, has declared the Second Sunday of Easter the "Divine Mercy Sunday" (Decree *Misericors et miserator*, 5 May 2000). In 1930s a special devotion began spreading throughout the world getting inspiration from the diary of a young Polish nun namely **Saint Faustina Kowalska**. **Saint Faustina** wrote a diary (a journal) of about 600 pages, in obedience to her spiritual father about the revelations she received about God's mercy.

Her message of mercy is that God loves us — all of us — no matter how great our sins are. He wants us to realize that His mercy is greater than all our sins put together. So if we will call upon Him with trust we will receive His mercy. Through us His mercy will flow to other people. Thus all the people of the world will come to share His joy. It is a message we can call to mind simply by remembering the alphabets, ABC, that is the ABC's Mercy.

A — Ask for His Mercy. God wants us to approach Him constantly in prayer repenting of our sins and asking Him to pour His mercy out upon us and upon the whole world.

B — Be merciful. God wants us to receive His mercy and let it flow through us to others.

C — Complete trust in Jesus. God wants us to know that the more we trust in Jesus, the more we will receive His mercy.

Devotion to The Divine Mercy involves a total commitment to God who is Mercy. It is a decision to trust Him completely, to accept His mercy with

thanksgiving, and to be merciful as He is merciful. If we properly understand and implement them, they will help us grow as genuine followers of Christ.

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

1. "This people honor 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).

It's a frightening fact that most people of Christ's time, who were actively practicing their religion and eagerly awaiting the promised Messiah, were not able to recognize Him when He came. The Pharisees 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 relationship with God, they were not living the way He wanted them to live.

So, it's not enough for us to hang The Divine Mercy image in our homes, it is not enough to pray the Chaplet everyday at three o'clock, and it is not enough to receive Holy Communion on Sundays. Rather we have to examine ourselves- 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? Are we growing more and more as people of mercy? Or are we just giving "lip service" to God?

So how can we turn to be good Christians according to the heart of Jesus? Our Lord strongly speaks about this to Saint Faustina: according to the instructions given to St. Faustina we are to do the following things.

1. Venerate the Sacred image of Divine Mercy, where Jesus is pictured as King of Mercy. Jesus told her that the soul that venerates this image shall never perish.
2. Observe the hour of Great mercy. Everyday, at three o' clock in the afternoon is the hour of His Great Mercy when we recall His death. Jesus said "in this hour I will refuse nothing to the soul that makes a request of me in virtue of my passion".
3. Receive the Sacraments of Mercy. The sacraments of penance and Eucharist are miracle of mercy which should be received frequently with great trust and love. Those who do this shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment.
4. Pray the chaplet of Mercy. In 1935 our Lord taught St. Faustina a special prayer of mercy. According to the instruction of Jesus, whoever recites this chaplet will receive great mercy and obtain everything.
5. Finally we are to show mercy to our neighbors always and everywhere. The church teaches us to be merciful in different ways. They are:
 - a. By doing the corporal works of mercy, which are seven in number:
 1. Feed the hungry.
 2. Give drink to the thirsty.

3. Clothe the naked.
4. Shelter the Homeless.
5. Comfort the imprisoned.
6. Visit the sick.
7. Bury the dead.

b. By doing the spiritual works of mercy, which are also seven in number:

1. Admonish sinners.
2. Instruct the uninformed.
3. Counsel the doubtful.
4. Comfort the sorrowful.
5. Be patient with those in error.
6. Forgive offenses.
7. Pray for the living and the dead.

By asking for the Lord's mercy, trusting in His mercy, and sincerely trying to live His mercy in our lives, we can assure that we will never hear Him say of us, "Their hearts are far from Me," but rather a wonderful promise, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." God bless you!

Every time when we come together you cry out, "Lord, have mercy," "Christ have Mercy, Lord have Mercy! Bible reminds us 'Blessed are the Merciful; for they shall receive Mercy'. Jesus, I trust in You. Mercy of God, I trust in You. "Let those who fear the Lord say, 'His mercy endures forever.' " —
Psalm 118:4