

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY ~ THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER



On the second Sunday of Easter of the Jubilee Year 2000, at the Mass for the canonization of St. Faustina Kowalska, Pope John Paul II proclaimed to the world that “from now on throughout the Church this Sunday will be called “Divine Mercy Sunday.”

In 1925 Helena Kowalska entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy and took the name *Faustina*. She was well liked by the other sisters, but they did not appreciate or understand her deep interior life, which included visions and prophecies. On February 22, 1931, Sister Faustina experienced a vision of Christ—the image we know as the Divine Mercy—and was told to paint the image with the prayer *Jesus, I trust in you*. Her spiritual director was convinced that the vision was real and since she could not paint, he found an artist to create the painting—shown to the world on April 28, 1935. He further advised Sister Faustina to record her visions in a diary. Sister Faustina died of tuberculosis at the age of 33. She was canonized on April 30, 2000.

The revelations experienced and recorded by Sister Faustina were of a private nature and are therefore not essential to anyone’s acceptance of the Catholic faith. These types of visions and revelations are described in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: “Throughout the ages there have been so-called ‘private’ revelations, some of which have been recognized by the authority of the Church. They do not belong, however, to the Deposit of Faith. It is not their role to improve or compete Christ’s definitive revelation, but to help live more fully by it in a certain period of history” (#67). In another section the *Catechism* describes “popular piety”: “The religious sense of the Christian people has always found expression in various forms of piety surrounding the Church’s sacramental life, such as veneration of relics, visits to sanctuaries, pilgrimages, processions, Stations of the Cross, the Rosary, medals, etc. These expressions of piety extend the liturgical life of the Church, but do not replace it. Pastoral discernment is needed to sustain and support popular piety (#1674-76). The Divine Mercy devotion is meant to foster the virtue of trust in God’s mercy that finds its fulfillment in the liturgy of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist. Popular piety animates the faith attitudes that make participation in the sacraments more vital and fruitful.

How to Celebrate the Feast of Divine Mercy

The Feast of Divine Mercy is intended to celebrate and proclaim God’s tender mercy, the mercy that is available to all who turn to Him with trust.

Preparing for Divine Mercy Sunday, we promise by the sacrament of Reconciliation to focus on God’s mercy; mercy which is love and more powerful than evil, sin and death. We give a whole-hearted confession, holding nothing back.

The **Nine Day Novena** (*see reverse*) is not a novena for personal intentions but a prayer for the whole Church and the world. We begin the Novena on **Good Friday**, nine days before Divine Mercy Sunday.

In order to remind us that *we* are to become living images of God’s mercy, living *icons* of God’s mercy, we venerate the image of the merciful Savior—the image of the Divine Mercy.

The **Divine Mercy Chaplet** (*see reverse*) may be prayed at any time, but a good time for praying the chaplet is at 3:00 p.m., bringing to mind the hour of Christ’s Death.

The “conditions’ for a proper Divine Mercy devotion are trust in God’s goodness and active love toward neighbor, being in a state of “Sanctifying Grace” (having gone to Confession), and worthily receiving Holy Communion. The message of Divine Mercy can be encapsulated in the **ABC’s of Mercy**:

- ❖ A—Ask for His Mercy
- ❖ B—Be Merciful
- ❖ C—Completely trust in Jesus

Within the ABC’s of Mercy the devotions of the Divine Mercy find their purpose.

- ❖ The devotions are always directed to God’s will and not our own will.
- ❖ They are not meant to replace the Sacramental vessels of grace. The devotions are to focus on Jesus: His mercy, His will, and His glory and to lead us to the Sacraments.

Observing the Feast of Divine Mercy

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

The Divine Mercy Novena (*Nine Days of Intercessions*)

- ✠ **First Day:** "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."
- ✠ **Second Day:** "Today bring to Me the Souls of Priests and Religious, and immerse them in My unfathomable mercy. It was they who gave me strength to endure My bitter Passion. Through them as through channels My mercy flows out upon mankind."
- ✠ **Third Day:** "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 a drop of consolation in the midst of an ocean of bitterness."
- ✠ **Fourth Day:** "Today bring to Me those who do not believe in God and those who do not 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."
- ✠ **Fifth Day:** "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."
- ✠ **Sixth Day:** 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. I favor humble souls with My confidence.
- ✠ **Seventh Day:** 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.
- ✠ **Eighth Day:** "Today bring to Me the Souls who are in the prison of 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."
- ✠ **Ninth Day:** "Today bring to Me the 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."

The Divine Mercy Chaplet is said on a Rosary:

- ✠ Begin with the Sign of the Cross, 1 Our Father, 1 Hail Mary and The Apostles Creed.
- ✠ Then on the Our Father Beads say the following: 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 10 Hail Mary Beads say the following: For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.
- ✠ (Repeat step 2 and 3 for all five decades).
- ✠ Conclude with (three times): Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world

Indulgences

Plenary indulgence

I. The usual conditions for every plenary indulgence: sacramental confession [according to previously issued norms, within about 20 days before or after] ; Eucharistic communion [according to previously issued norms, preferably on the day, or the days before or after] ; prayer for the intentions of Supreme Pontiff [certain prayers are not specified]

II. The specific conditions for this Indulgence on 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 honor of Divine Mercy or, 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!)"

Partial Indulgence

A partial indulgence, granted to the faithful who, at least with a contrite heart, pray to the merciful Lord Jesus a legitimately approved invocation. [e.g. Jesus I trust in You. My Jesus mercy. or any other approved invocation]

We should use Lent as preparation for the Feast and go to confession even before Holy Week; the confessional requirement does not have to be met on the Feast itself - an near impossible burden for the clergy if it did. The Communion requirement is easily met that day, however, since it is a day of obligation, being Sunday. We would only need confession again, if received earlier in Lenten or Easter Season, if we were in the state of mortal sin on the Feast.