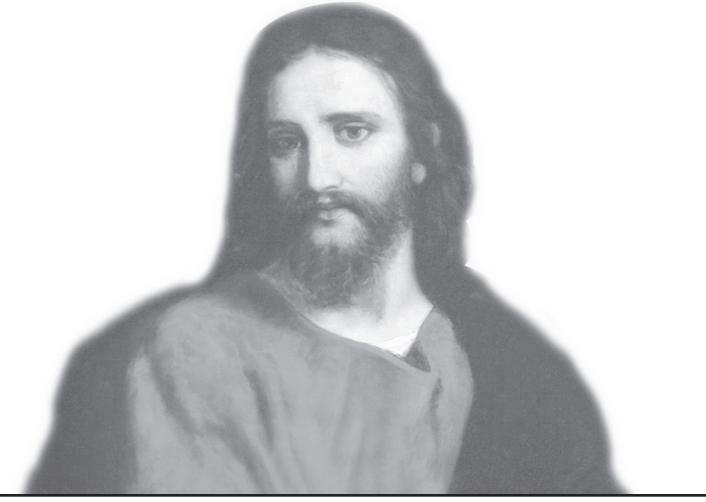


DISCOVER

the Joy of Christ



Who Needs Mercy?

The Church celebrates the Feast of Divine Mercy the Sunday after Easter, a fitting time to focus on the mercy God has shown each one of us God poured out through the suffering, death and resurrection of His Son, and the mercy He shows each one of us in ways too numerous to count.

Mercy comes from the Latin word *misericordia*, which means God's Heart desiring to alleviate our misery. Personal sin causes our misery. The merciful love of God is the central theme of the Bible and it is prevalent in the readings for Mass. The Gospel describes Jesus instituting the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a "Sacrament of Mercy" as He breathes on the Apostles and says to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained" (John 20; 22-23).

In our day, there is a renewed and vital focus on God's mercy. In the year 2000, Pope John Paul II canonized Sister Faustina Kowalska, a Polish nun who in the 1930's wrote a diary recording the revelations from Jesus that she was receiving about God's mercy. The Lord chose Sr. Faustina so that she would relay this urgent message of God's merciful love to our troubled world. Jesus said to St. Faustina, "Proclaim to the whole world My unfathomable mercy. Tell aching mankind to snuggle close to My merciful Heart, and I will fill it with peace" (*Diary*, 1141, 1074).

Pope John Paul II, who established Divine Mercy Sunday and then died on its Vigil (the evening before the feast day), was canonized on this very Feast in 2014. There are no coincidences here! Saint John Paul II was a modern-day spiritual hero and earned the title "The Great Mercy Pope" as God's mercy was a key for him.

Pope John Paul II spoke repeatedly about the need for us to turn to the mercy of God as the answer to the specific problems of our times. One of his most amazing encyclicals was "Rich in Mercy" (*Dives*

in Misericordia). In his writing, Pope John Paul II describes the mercy of God as the presence of a love which is greater than any evil, greater than any sin and greater than death. He calls on us to devote time in daily prayer to pleading for God's mercy for the whole world.

We are called to personally experience this mercy of God through some of the following means: venerating the image of Divine Mercy which contains the signature "Jesus, I Trust in You;" Praying the simple Chaplet of Divine Mercy on Rosary beads that takes about 5 – 7 minutes; focusing on Jesus' death at the three o'clock hour; being merciful to others especially through forgiveness.

Let us enter with all our hearts into the gift of Divine Mercy, not just on this Feast today but in a burst of gratitude, every day of our lives.

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