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Divine Mercy Sunday & Sr. Faustina Kowalska A sermon by Pope John Paul II



Today my joy is truly great in presenting the life and witness of Sr Faustina Kowalska to the whole Church as a gift of God for our time. By divine Providence, the life of this humble daughter of Poland was completely linked with the history of the 20th century, the century we have just left behind. In fact, it was between the First and Second World Wars that Christ entrusted his message of mercy to her. Those who remember, who were witnesses and participants in the events of those years and the horrible sufferings they caused for millions of people, know well how necessary was the message of mercy.

Jesus told Sr Faustina: "Humanity will not find peace until it turns trustfully to divine mercy". Through the work of the Polish religious, this message has become linked for ever to the 20th century, the last of the second millennium and the bridge to the third. It is not a new message but can be considered a gift of special enlightenment that helps us to relive the Gospel of Easter more intensely, to offer it as a ray of light to the men and women of our time.

What will the years ahead bring us? What will man's future on earth be like? We are not given to know. However, it is certain that in addition to new progress there will unfortunately be no lack of painful experiences. But the light of divine mercy, which the Lord in a way wished to return to the world through Sr Faustina's charism, will illumine the way for the men and women of the third millennium.

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". In the various readings, the liturgy seems to indicate the path of mercy which, while re-establishing the relationship of each person with God, also creates new relations of fraternal solidarity among human beings. Christ has taught us that man not only receives and experiences the mercy of God, but is also called to practise mercy towards others:



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“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy”. He also showed us the many paths of mercy, which not only forgives sins but reaches out to all human needs. Jesus bent over every kind of human poverty, material and spiritual.



It is not easy to love with a deep love, which lies in the authentic gift of self. This love can only be learned by penetrating the mystery of God’s love. Looking at him, being one with his fatherly heart, we are able to look with new eyes at our brothers and sisters, with an attitude of unselfishness and solidarity, of generosity and forgiveness. All this is mercy!

Sr Faustina Kowalska wrote in her Diary: “I feel tremendous pain when I see the sufferings of my neighbours. All my neighbours’ sufferings reverberate in my own heart; I carry their anguish in my heart in such a way that it even physically destroys me. I would like all their sorrows to fall upon me, in order to relieve my neighbour”. This is the degree of compassion to which love leads, when it takes the love of God as its measure!

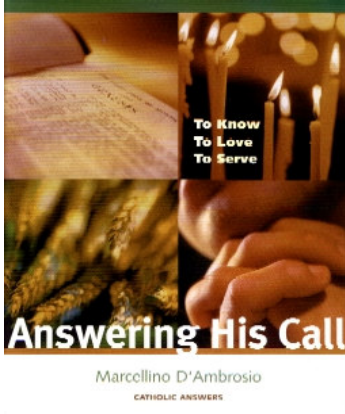
It is this love which must inspire humanity today, if it is to face the crisis of the meaning of life, the challenges of the most diverse needs and, especially, the duty to defend the dignity of every human person. Thus the message of divine mercy is also implicitly a message about the value of every human being. Each person is precious in God’s eyes; Christ gave his life for each one; to everyone the Father gives his Spirit and offers intimacy.

This consoling message is addressed above all to those who, afflicted by a particularly harsh trial or crushed by the weight of the sins they committed, have lost all confidence in life and are tempted to give in to despair. To them the gentle face of Christ is offered; those rays from his heart touch them and shine upon them, warm them, show them the way and fill them with hope. How many souls have been consoled by the prayer “Jesus, I trust in you”, which Providence intimated through Sr Faustina!

And you, Faustina, a gift of God to our time, a gift from the land of Poland to the whole Church, obtain for us an awareness of the depth of divine mercy; help us to have a living experience of it and to bear witness to it among our brothers and sisters. May your message of light and hope spread throughout the world, spurring sinners to conversion, calming rivalries and hatred and opening individuals and nations to the practice of brotherhood. Today, fixing our gaze with you on the face of the risen Christ, let us make our own your prayer of trusting abandonment and say with firm hope: Christ Jesus, I trust in you!



From [sermon given by Pope John Paul II](#) on the occasion of the canonization of Sister Faustina Kowalska on 30 April 2000. Since 2000, the second Sunday of Easter has also been known as Divine Mercy Sunday.



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