

Divine Mercy Sunday Information and Homily Aids

➤ SUMMARY OF THE DIVINE MERCY MESSAGE

Jesus appeared to Saint Faustina throughout the 1930's with important messages for mankind regarding His love and mercy. In obedience to her religious superiors, she wrote His messages down in her Diary. After her death the diary was banned for almost 20 years due to bad translations and misinformation. However, the ban was lifted in 1978 and the messages contained in the Diary were not only approved, but have been emphatically preached and promoted by every Pope ever since. Her Diary—which is over 700 pages long—has since been published and can be obtained in both print and digital versions. In 2000, Pope John Paul II canonized Saint Faustina as the first Saint of the New Millennium.

➤ ORIGIN OF DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

One particular element of Jesus' messages was a "Feast of Mercy," about which He spoke to Saint Faustina fourteen different times. Though we can seek Christ's Mercy at any time, Divine Mercy Sunday is a day that Christ instituted to provide His forgiveness and graces in an exceptional way. He said:

[W]hoever approaches the Fount of Life on this day will be granted complete remission of sins and punishment. (Diary, 300)

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. (Diary, 699)

On April 30, 2000, Pope John Paul II answered the Lord's call for a "Feast of Mercy" and established the first Divine Mercy Sunday. This was the same day that he canonized Saint Faustina. It's no wonder that he was reported to declare, "*This is the happiest day of my life.*"

➤ HOW TO OBTAIN THE PROMISED GRACES OF DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Jesus made it very simple to receive the "***complete remission of sins and punishment***" that He promised.

- 1) **Go to Confession.** The Church teaches that going to Confession sometime during Lent is sufficient
- 2) **Receive Holy Communion in a State of Grace, and trusting in the Mercy of Jesus**

It's evident just how badly Jesus wants to forgive sinners. He couldn't have made this any easier on us.

➤ THE GRACES OF DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY ARE NOT THE SAME AS THOSE OF A PLENARY INDULGENCE

From the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M, the official protectors and promoters of the Divine Mercy message, and the publishers of St. Faustina's Diary.:

Unfortunately, a lot of people confuse the great grace of Divine Mercy Sunday with a plenary indulgence. It's not the same thing. To get a plenary indulgence, you need to do the indulgenced act, pray for the intentions of the Holy Father, go to confession (within 20 days), receive Holy Communion, and be detached from all sin.

That last one is the kicker. Are we detached from all sin? Saint Philip Neri was speaking to a large crowd of people who had gathered for some Church event to receive a plenary indulgence, and the Holy Spirit told St. Philip that only two people in the whole crowd were going to receive the plenary indulgence: Philip himself and a seven-year-old boy – presumably because everyone else was attached to sin.

Now, the good news about the grace of Divine Mercy Sunday is that to receive it, you simply need to go to confession before or on the feast – the experts say that sometime during Lent suffices – be in the state of grace (no mortal sin), and receive Holy Communion with the intention of obtaining the promised grace. Of course, we should also do acts of mercy such as forgiving people, praying for others, and having the intention to be more merciful to our neighbor.

-- From, "What is Divine Mercy," <http://www.marian.org/whatwedo/divinemeracy.php>

➤ PROOF THAT JESUS ESPECIALLY WANTS POOR SINNERS TO CELEBRATE DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. (Diary, 699)

Let the greatest sinners place their trust in My mercy. They have the right before others to trust in the abyss of My mercy. My daughter, write about my mercy towards tormented souls. Souls that make an appeal to My mercy delight me. To such souls I grant even more graces than they ask. (Diary, 1146)

The greater the sinner, the greater the right he has to My mercy. (Diary, 723)

My Heart overflows with great mercy for souls, and especially for poor sinners. If only they could understand that I am the best of Fathers to them... (Diary, 367)

➤ **A FEAST LONG FORGOTTEN**

When Sister Faustina told her superiors that Jesus was asking for a “Feast of Mercy” to be celebrated on the Sunday after Easter, she was told that there already was such a feast. Her superiors were correct, as the “Octave Day of Easter” was already on the church calendar, though seemingly forgotten and not celebrated. When Sister Faustina went back and told Jesus that this feast already existed He said, “**And who knows about this feast? No one!**” This explains why He was so adamant about having the day celebrated once again, and for it to be known specifically as *Divine Mercy Sunday*.

➤ **WHAT’S SO GREAT ABOUT DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY**

In our Catholic tradition, we celebrate Easter—the greatest Feast of the year—for eight full days. And it’s precisely the eighth day which is the climax of the entire Feast. You could say that the 8th day is the “greatest day of the greatest Feast.” And this is exactly how it was seen in the early Church.

It’s no wonder, then, that St. Augustine in his sermons calls the whole Octave of Easter “days of mercy and pardon” and the Octave Day itself, “the compendium of the days of mercy.” In his Summa Theologiae, St. Thomas Aquinas echoes the early Fathers when he describes the Octave Day as the goal and the second perfection of Easter.

- Father Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, in *Divine Mercy: The Heart of the Gospel*

➤ **THE CRITICAL ROLE OF THE PRIEST**

Taken, once again, from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception

... On five occasions our Lord told Sister Faustina [as recorded in her Diary] to tell priests about His mercy. She was to tell them:

- *that they are to receive mercy (177),*
- *that they are to tell everyone about his great and unfathomable mercy (570),*
- *that they are to proclaim mercy to sinners (50),*
- *that hardened sinners will repent on hearing their words of mercy, and wondrous power to touch hearts will be given to priests who proclaim His mercy (1521), and*
- *that priests are to recommend the Chaplet of The Divine Mercy to sinners (687).*

The role of the priest is irreplaceable in the plan of Jesus. It is the priest, above all others, who Jesus most wants proclaiming His message, *in persona Christi*.

➤ **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

You may be interested in directing your parishioners to www.DivineMercyMessage.com, which offers more details about this great devotion in a attractive way that even non-Catholics can understand.