

2nd Sunday of Easter – Divine Mercy Sunday – April 18/19, 2020 – Reflection

“The favors of the Lord are not exhausted, His mercies are not spent;
They are renewed each morning, so great is His faithfulness.

My portion is the Lord, says my soul; therefore will I hope in Him.”

From the Lamentations of Jeremiah

Twenty years ago, St. Pope John Paul II declared Sister Maria Faustina Kowalska to be a saint in heaven and the Apostle of Divine Mercy and from that day on, Divine Mercy Sunday would be celebrated throughout the Church on the Second Sunday of Easter.

Born in 1905 in Poland, the third of ten children, she was christened with the name Helena. Always deeply religious, even as a little child, Helena longed to serve Christ in the religious life as a nun. In 1925, she entered the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy and was given the name of Sr. Mary Faustina. Though she was largely uneducated, she served the community and the Church by working as a cook, a gardener and as the convent's doorkeeper. Even among the sisters, few understood the depth of Sr. Faustina's spirituality. She was a mystic who often communicated with the Lord Jesus. The Lord asked her to keep a diary of what she saw and heard when He would appear to her. Her holy life was not long - she died from tuberculosis in 1938 at the age of thirty-three. Her remains rest at the Sanctuary of the Divine Mercy in

Krakow, Poland. When St. Pope John Paul II canonized her in St. Peter's Square, she became the first saint of the new millennium, a saint for the twenty-first century!

In her Diary, she wrote that the Lord Jesus revealed Himself to her as the image of Divine Mercy ... clothed in a white garment, one hand raised in a gesture of blessing, the other touching the garment at the breast. From beneath the garment at His Sacred Heart were emanating two rays, one red, one blue. Sr. Faustina wrote of her awe but also great joy at seeing such a merciful Lord and wrote that she wanted to be "completely transformed into Your mercy and to be Your living reflection, O Lord."

In these difficult and frightening days, most of us have been without the sacraments of the Church. We have been kept away from the table of the Lord and unable to receive His Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist and we hunger for Him. We have been unable to bring our sins to the mercy seat of His love and forgiveness in Confession and we fear the "loss of heaven and the pains of hell, and, most of all, how our offenses have pained His Sacred Heart." We cry out, "Mercy, have mercy on your people, Lord, forgive us and take this plague from our midst!"

Jeremiah the prophet and St. Faustina remind us that the "mercies of the Lord are renewed each day with the dawn," but, if we would receive mercy, we must show mercy. St. Faustina prayed that her whole body might show mercy: "that my eyes may be merciful, so that I may never suspect or judge from appearances;" "that my ears may be merciful that I may give heed to my neighbors needs;" "that my tongue may be merciful, so that I should never speak negatively of my neighbor;"

"that my hands may be merciful, so that I may do only good to my neighbors and take upon myself the more difficult and toilsome tasks;" "that my feet may be merciful, so that I may hurry to assist my neighbor, overcoming my own fatigue and weariness for my true rest is in the service of my neighbor;" "that my heart may be merciful so that I myself may feel all the sufferings of my neighbor ... I will refuse my heart to no one. I will be sincere even with those who, I know, will abuse my kindness. And I will lock my self up in the most merciful Heart of Jesus. I will bear my own suffering in silence. May Your mercy, O Lord, rest upon me."

The world is suffering and cries out to God, "Have mercy on us, Lord!" And right about now, we could sure use a few heroes, a few angels of mercy to take care of us, support us, uplift us, comfort us, check in on us, pray for us. Could you be someone's hero; could your eyes and ears, your tongue, your hands and feet, your heart be someone's angel of mercy?

Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner. If you would receive mercy, so must you give mercy.

Jesus, I trust in You!