

NOTES AND QUOTES FOR REFLECTION ON DIVINE MERCY

- From Creation, God has revealed his nature as love itself, in Sacred Scripture and most perfectly in the life, Passion, death and Resurrection of his Son, Jesus. Saints have also borne witness to God's unfathomable love, e.g., in the writings of Augustine, Aquinas, Catherine of Siena, Francis of Assisi, Margaret Mary Alacoque and Therese of Lisieux.
- In his second encyclical, *Rich in Mercy*, Bl. Pope John Paul II offers an extended meditation on the mystery of God's mercy, which he calls "the greatest of the attributes and perfections of God" (*Dives in Misericordia*, 13). He returned to this theme throughout his pontificate:

As a gift to humanity, which sometimes seems bewildered and overwhelmed by the power of evil, selfishness, and fear, the Risen Lord offers His love that pardons, reconciles, and reopens hearts to love. It is a love that converts hearts and gives peace. How much the world needs to understand and accept Divine Mercy!

Lord, who reveals the Father's love by Your death and Resurrection, we believe in You and confidently repeat to You today: Jesus, I trust in You, have mercy upon us and upon the whole world.

~Bl. Pope John Paul II, *Regina Caeli* message prepared for Divine Mercy Sunday, April 3, 2005

What is mercy if not the boundless love of God, who confronted with human sin, restrains the sentiment of severe justice and, allowing Himself to be moved by the wretchedness of His creatures, spurs Himself to the total gift of self, in the Son's cross ...?

Who can say that he is free from sin and does not need God's mercy? As people of this restless time of ours, wavering between the emptiness of self-exaltation and the humiliation of despair, we have a greater need than ever for a regenerating experience of mercy.

~Bl. Pope John Paul II, *Regina Caeli* message, April 10, 1994

- Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI has called John Paul "a great apostle of Divine Mercy" and echoed his predecessor's thoughts:

In our time, humanity needs a strong proclamation and witness of God's mercy. Beloved John Paul II, a great apostle of Divine Mercy, prophetically intuited this urgent pastoral need. He dedicated his second Encyclical to it and throughout his pontificate made himself a missionary of God's love to all peoples.

~Pope Benedict XVI, *Angelus* message, September 16, 2007

Mercy is the central nucleus of the Gospel message; it is the very name of God, the Face with which he revealed himself in the Old Covenant and fully in Jesus Christ, the incarnation of creative and redemptive Love. May this merciful love also shine on the face of the Church and show itself through the sacraments, in particular that of Reconciliation, and in works of charity, both communitarian and individual. May all that the Church says and does manifest the mercy God feels for man.

~Pope Benedict XVI, *Regina Caeli* address, March 30, 2008

ORIGIN OF DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY, THE DIVINE MERCY IMAGE, THE CHAPLET, AND THE NOVENA

Saint Faustina: Mankind's need for the message of Divine Mercy took on dire urgency in the 20th Century, when civilization began to experience an "eclipse of the sense of God" and, therefore to lose the understanding of the sanctity and inherent dignity of human life. In the 1930s, Jesus chose a humble Polish nun, St. Maria Faustina Kowalska, to receive private revelations concerning Divine Mercy that were recorded in her *Diary*. Bl. John Paul explains:

This was precisely the time when those ideologies of evil, nazism and communism, were taking shape. Sister Faustina became the herald of the one message capable of off-setting the evil of those ideologies, that fact that God is mercy—the truth of the merciful Christ. And for this reason, when I was called to the See of Peter, I felt impelled to pass on those experiences of a fellow Pole that deserve a place in the treasury of the universal Church.

~ Bl. Pope John Paul II, *Memory and Identity* (2005)

Divine Mercy Sunday: St. Faustina's *Diary* records 14 occasions when Jesus requested that a Feast of Mercy (Divine Mercy Sunday) be observed, for example:

My daughter, tell the whole world about My inconceivable mercy. I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. 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. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. ... Let no soul fear to draw near to Me. ... It is My desire that it be solemnly celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter. Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the Fount of My Mercy. (Diary, no. 699)

On May 5, 2000, five days after the canonization of St. Faustina, the Vatican decreed that the Second Sunday of Easter would henceforth be known as Divine Mercy Sunday.

The Image: Jesus appeared to St. Faustina in a vision, with his right hand raised in a blessing and his left touching his garment above his heart. Red and white rays emanate from his heart, symbolizing the blood and water that was poured out for our salvation and our sanctification. The Lord requested that "Jesus, I trust in You" be inscribed under his image. Jesus asked that his image be painted and venerated throughout the world: "I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish" (*Diary*, no. 48) and "By means of this image I will grant many graces to souls" (*Diary*, no. 742).

The Chaplet of Divine Mercy: The Chaplet was also given to St. Faustina with this promise: "Encourage souls to say the chaplet which I have given you" (*Diary*, no. 1541). "Whoever will recite it will receive great mercy at the hour of death. ... Even if there were a sinner most hardened, if he were to recite this chaplet only once, he would receive grace from My infinite mercy. I desire that the whole world know My infinite mercy" (*Diary*, no. 687). (Instructions for its recitation are provided on a separate page.)

The Divine Mercy Novena: Jesus gave St. Faustina nine intentions for which to pray the Chaplet beginning on Good Friday and ending on Holy Saturday.

(www.ewtn.com/devotionals/mercy/novena.htm)

HOW TO PRAY THE CHAPLET OF DIVINE MERCY

Optional Opening Prayers:

You expired, Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls,
and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world.

O Fount of Life, unfathomable Divine Mercy,
envelop the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us.

(Repeat 3 times) O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fountain of
Mercy for us, I trust in You!

Our Father, Hail Mary and the Apostle's Creed

For each of the five decades *(On each "Our Father" bead of the rosary, pray)*

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 each of the 10 "Hail Mary" beads, pray)

For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

Concluding prayer *(Repeat 3 times)*

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

Optional Closing Prayer

Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of compassion inexhaustible, look
kindly upon us and increase Your mercy in us, that in difficult moments we might not despair
nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to Your holy will, which is
Love and Mercy itself.