

SUNDAY OF DIVINE MERCY

Each year, on the Second Sunday of Easter – the last day of the Easter Octave – the church celebrates the Sunday of Divine Mercy. On this day, we contemplate the fullness of the Paschal Mystery – Christ’s Passion, death, and Resurrection. The basis of the whole Easter Mystery is the merciful love of God. From the beginning of creation, throughout Scripture, and most perfectly in the life, Passion, death and Resurrection of His Son, Jesus, God has been revealed as love itself. In His infinite love for us, God desires nothing more than to forgive our sins and offer us His mercy.

Our world’s need for the message of Divine Mercy took on new urgency in the 20th century. It was during this time that the world witnessed the rise of Nazism and communism and experienced the horror of the world at war. Civilization was losing the understanding of the sanctity and inherent dignity of every human life.

As these evil ideologies were taking shape, Jesus appeared to a humble Polish nun, whom we know as St. Maria Faustina Kowalska. As Jesus continued to appear to St. Faustina, she recorded His messages to her in her Diary. On one such occasion, Jesus said to St. Faustina:

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 (Diary 699).

Jesus appeared to the humble Faustina and asked that we celebrate the gift of His mercy on the Second Sunday of Easter- the last day of the Easter Octave. Our celebration of the Easter Octave is a celebration of mercy and forgiveness that are now available to all of us, by virtue of Christ’s Resurrection. We must only run toward the outstretched arms of Christ.

St. John Paul the Great, who canonized St. Faustina, said in his 2001 homily for the Sunday of Divine Mercy, “*Divine Mercy! This is the Easter gift that the Church received for the risen Christ and offers to humanity.*” This year on April 19, 2020 we celebrate that Easter gift of God’s unending, merciful love for all His children. This is at the heart of the Gospel. Let us never fail to seek the mercy that God desires to freely give us. *Jesus, we trust in You.*

Taken from the usccb.org website.