

Daily Meditations

Divine Mercy thoughts from Fr:

On this Second Sunday of Easter, the readings refer to God's mercy and His faithfulness. Today is Divine Mercy Sunday, which was established by Pope John Paul II in the year 2000.

Here is a bit of background to help understand this idea of Divine Mercy Sunday.

St. Faustina was a 20th-century Polish nun to whom Jesus appeared and asked for a special feast devoted to Divine Mercy to be celebrated on the Sunday after Easter. The psalm and Gospel reading for the liturgy on that day focus on mercy; on the forgiveness offered by God for those who are truly sorry for their sins.

In her diary, St. Faustina recounted Jesus' request: "My daughter, tell the whole world about my inconceivable mercy. I desire that the feast of Mercy be a refuge and a 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."

St. John Paul II established the first Sunday after Easter as the feast of Divine Mercy on April 30, 2000, the same day he canonized St. Faustina.

Divine Mercy Sunday is a day when many Catholics go to confession. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, however, the sacrament is currently only available in the Archdiocese to those whose death is imminent or by appointment.

Even though the Sacrament of Penance is limited due to the virus, we are encouraged to make acts of "perfect contrition," as suggested by Pope Francis, when they are unable to go to confession.

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, contrition is called "perfect" when it "arises from a love by which God is loved above all else." Such contrition remits venial sins and obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it "includes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible."

Pope Francis said the message of the catechism is "very clear. "If you cannot find a priest to confess to, speak directly with God, your father, and tell him the truth," the pope explained. "Say, 'Lord, I did this, this, this. Forgive me.' and ask for pardon with all your heart."

Make an act of contrition, the pope said, and promise God, "I will go to confession afterward, but forgive me now.' And immediately you will return to a state of grace with God."

"As the catechism teaches," Pope Francis said, "you can draw near to God's forgiveness without having a priest at hand. Think about it. This is the moment."

Here is the image of Divine Mercy. At the bottom, the line says, "Jesus, I trust in you." To the right of the image of Jesus, is a picture of St. Faustina.

The words, "Jesus, I trust in you." are probably some of the most important prayer words we can offer at this time. There is so much uncertainty as we continue to deal with the virus issue. To see long lines of people in our county waiting for food handouts, the skyrocketing unemployment, closed businesses and churches along with the significant drop in farm prices are all very frightening. Yet, Jesus reminds us that fear is useless. What is needed is trust. We do not know what the future will bring or what it will look like, but we can be assured of one thing: the presence of the Risen Jesus is with us and He offers us a spirit of hope in the situation all of humanity finds itself in these days. Pray for the gift of a deeper sense of faith and hope this week. Jesus, we trust in you.