

“I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike” (Mt 11:25). Today we celebrate the Memorial of Saint Faustina Kowalska to whom the Lord revealed a treasure-trove of wisdom about his Divine Mercy.

Helena Kowalska, a native daughter of Poland, was the third of ten children being born on August 25, 1905. As a young child, she loved to pray and had a caring heart for the poor. “At the age of 7 she had already felt the first stirrings of a religious vocation.”ⁱ However, it wasn’t until she was almost 20 before she could follow through on her childhood ambitions. “On August 1, 1925 she entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy and took the name Sister Mary Faustina.”ⁱⁱ

The rhythm of religious life suited her well. “She zealously performed her tasks and faithfully observed the rule of religious life. She was recollected and at the same time very natural, serene and full of kindness and disinterested love for her neighbor.”ⁱⁱⁱ Nothing of the ordinary routine of religious life hinted at the extraordinary interior life she held with God.

“The process of contemplating and getting to know the mystery of God’s mercy helped develop within Sr. Mary Faustina the attitude of child-like trust in God as well as mercy toward the neighbors.”^{iv} She prayed for a closer union with Christ. “O my Jesus, each of Your saints reflects one of Your virtues; I desire to reflect Your compassionate heart, full of mercy; I want to glorify it. Let Your mercy, O Jesus, be impressed upon my heart and soul like a seal, and this will be my badge in this and the future life” (Diary 1242).

God responded to her childlike trust and total commitment with “extraordinary gifts, such as: revelations, visions, hidden stigmata, participation in the Passion of the Lord, the gift of bilocation, the reading of human souls, the gift of prophecy, [and] the rare gift of mystical engagement and marriage. The living relationship with God, the Blessed Mother, the Angels, the Saints, the souls in Purgatory — with the entire supernatural world — was as equally real for her as was the world she perceived with her senses.”^v

Jesus entrusted the special mission of being a “Secretary” of His Mercy to Sister Faustina. He asked her to write down his messages of Divine Mercy for the world in her diary and to have an image painted of his Divine Mercy, with red and white rays issuing from his heart.^{vi} In the words of Jesus from the Diary: “Today I am sending you with My mercy to the people of the whole world. I do not want to punish aching mankind, but I desire to heal it, pressing it to My Merciful Heart” (Diary 1588).

Sister Faustina suffered from tuberculosis and accepted this and other suffering as a voluntary sacrifice for sinners. She died in Krakow at the age of 33 on October 5, 1938. “The reputation of the holiness of her life grew as did the cult to the Divine Mercy and the graces she obtained from God through her intercession.”^{vii} On April 18, 1993, Pope John Paul II raised Sister Faustina to the glory of sainthood.

We too are called to be apostles of God’s mercy. When we pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet, we are following through on the mission first entrusted to Sister Faustina. Let us pray for a childlike trust in God that we may more effectively spread his love and mercy to our world.

ⁱ vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20000430_faustina_en.html

ⁱⁱ Ibid

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid

^{iv} Ibid

^v Ibid

^{vi} catholicnewsagency.com/saint/st-faustina-virgin-737

^{vii} Ibid, Vataican