



Divine Mercy Holy Hour

3:00 p.m. Sunday, April 12, 2015

Please join us at St. Joseph's Catholic Church as we celebrate with the Holy Eucharistic presence, sing the Divine Mercy Chaplet and have quiet prayer. With preparations noted below, it is possible to also receive an indulgence – either for oneself or a soul in purgatory. Also see the websites below for further information, including a nine day Novena.

Q. What is Divine Mercy Sunday?

A. Divine Mercy Sunday is the title of the Second Sunday of the Easter season. It was named by Pope John Paul II at the canonization of St. Maria Faustina on April 30, 2000, and then officially decreed by the Vatican.

Pope John Paul II said of Divine Mercy Sunday, "In a special way, it is the Sunday of thanksgiving for all the goodness that God has shown us in the whole Easter mystery" (April 23, 1995). Here, he underscored the Church's understanding that Divine Mercy Sunday as the Octave Day of Easter brings us the fullness of Christ's Resurrection — pointing back to the first day of our celebration on Easter Sunday and now to its fullness on the eighth day, the Octave.

Divine Mercy Sunday, then, can be seen as the convergence of all the mysteries and graces of both Holy Week and Easter Week. It is like a multiple-exposure photograph of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and Easter Week. On Mercy Sunday, the Octave Day of Easter, we celebrate the great graces that are available to us through our risen Lord's victory over sin, death, and the Evil One.

In fact, our Lord revealed to St. Faustina, the great Apostle of Divine Mercy, that He desires on this day to pour out a flood of mercy on souls:

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 of St. Faustina, 699).

Q. What graces can I receive on the day?

A. Our Lord revealed to St. Faustina His desire to flood us with His graces on that day. Reflect on each of the promises and desires that He expressed about Divine Mercy Sunday, which are recorded in entry 699 of the *Diary of St. Faustina* — the main passage about the Feast of Mercy:

- On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open.
- I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon souls who approach the Fount of My Mercy [the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist].
- The soul that will go to Confession [beforehand] and receive Holy Communion [on that day] shall

obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment.

- On that day all the divine floodgates through which graces flow are opened.
- Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet.
- My mercy is so great that no mind, be it of man or of angel, will be able to fathom it throughout eternity.
- Every soul in its relation to Me will contemplate My love and mercy throughout eternity.
- The Feast of Mercy emerged from My very depths of tenderness.
- 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.

These promises and desires point to an amazing flood of graces that are available to us on Divine Mercy Sunday — including complete forgiveness of sins and punishment! The slate can be wiped clean, and we can be granted a completely fresh start in life.

Q. What about the indulgences for Divine Mercy Sunday? How can I receive an indulgence for myself or for a soul in purgatory?

A. First, we need to make one thing clear: The extraordinary graces mentioned in the last answer, which are based on private revelations contained in St. Faustina's *Diary*, are not replaced by the indulgences that the Church has granted for the feast day. Rather, the plenary and partial indulgences provide the faithful with another opportunity to receive graces on Divine Mercy Sunday — either for oneself or a soul in purgatory. And this opportunity for graces is officially sanctioned by the Church.

To understand these graces, we must understand what an indulgence is. When we sin, we not only offend God, but we also introduce disorder into our life and the lives of other people. It's true that in the Sacrament of Reconciliation we receive forgiveness from God through the ministry of the Church when we repent, confess our sins, and do penance with a firm intention to amend our lives. Even so, because of our sins, some disorder usually remains. There are also temporal consequences or punishments attached to that disorder. ("Temporal" simply means relating to our earthly existence.)

However, the good news is that Christ has given us His Church. As His Mystical Body, she has been granted the power to bind and loose in His name and to distribute graces from His superabundant treasury of merits — all flowing from His redemptive death. These treasures of redemption are available to all the faithful and can be used to remit or take away the temporal punishment due to sin for ourselves or the deceased. Further, they can be partial or plenary (complete).

In the case of Divine Mercy Sunday, Pope John Paul II in 2002 granted plenary and partial indulgences "motivated by an ardent desire to foster in Christians this devotion to Divine Mercy ... in the hope of offering great spiritual fruit to the faithful," according to the official decree.

To receive the plenary indulgence, the decree explained that the faithful must go to confession, receive the Eucharist, and offer prayers for the intentions of the Pope. One must also "with a soul totally detached from affection to any sin, even venial, participate in the pious practices undertaken in honor of Divine Mercy, or at least to recite in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament ... the Our Father, the Creed, and a pious invocation to the Merciful Lord Jesus."

A partial indulgence is granted to the faithful, who, at least with a contrite heart, pray to Jesus a legitimately approved invocation or prayer.

By Fr. George W. Kosicki, CSB, with David Came