

FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,

Today we celebrate **Divine Mercy Sunday!** In 2000, Pope St. John Paul II established this feast day for the universal church, following the command of our Lord Jesus as He spoke to St. Faustina, a Polish nun who died in the 1930s. In this **Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy**, it is good to celebrate with *great gusto* the infinite mercy of Almighty God. To remind you of the key parts of the Divine Mercy devotion, I will reiterate the acronym **FINCH**: **F**east, **I**mage, **N**ovena, **C**haplet, **H**our.

Today is the FEAST of Divine Mercy. Jesus said to St. Faustina, **“On that day, the very depths of my tender mercy are opened. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy. ... On that day, all the divine floodgates through which graces flow are opened** (*Diary of St. Faustina*, 699). He also said, **“The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment”** (*ibid.*). This is GREAT! There are no other “strings attached”! It truly is a day of Jubilee, when all sin is forgotten, all sin is gone simply by using the grace of Confession and the Eucharist. I pray you receive Communion today and get to **Confession**. I am offering many opportunities for this Sacramental grace.

The IMAGE of Divine Mercy, which Faustina had painted, are by the Sanctuary (over the doors), and we gave out as prayer cards and 8”x10” pictures. In it, the rays of red and white coming out of the Heart of Jesus symbolize the Blood and Water that flowed from Jesus’ side, as well as the wellspring of the Sacraments: Eucharist and Baptism. At the bottom of the picture are the key words, **“Jesus, I Trust in You.”** When I am struggling, I repeat these words over and over to remember Jesus’ faithfulness and mercy. Jesus said about the image, **“I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over [its] enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I Myself will defend it as My own glory”** (*Diary* 48). What a promise! I pray that you have put the image in a prominent place in your home, and spend some time gazing in love at this beautiful image of Jesus.

A NOVENA is a prayer which is usually prayed over the course of nine days (“novena” comes from the word for “nine”). The **Novena of Divine Mercy** is done by praying Chaplets (to be discussed next) over nine consecutive days. This prayer can be done anytime, but we just finished THE GREAT NOVENA, culminating today, the Feast of Divine Mercy. Jesus promised, **“By this novena, I will grant every possible grace to souls”** (*Diary*, 796). If you didn’t participate in the novena, I encourage you to do one on your own, and ask God for great graces of holiness for yourself or others... asking with great expectation!

The CHAPLET of Divine Mercy is very powerful, for it draws its strength from the Mass (“Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ...” – this means we offer the EUCHARIST, Jesus Himself, to the Father). St. Faustina was able to stop storms with this prayer, and I have found it powerful in my own life. It is prayed on ordinary Rosary beads, and takes about seven minutes to pray. Jesus said, **“The souls that say this chaplet will be embraced by My mercy during their lifetime and especially at the hour of their death”** (*Diary*, 754) and **“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”** (*Diary*, 687). During this Year of Mercy, we have been praying it before each of the Sunday Masses. If you have not done it yet, I encourage you to come and pray this with us before Mass... especially for conversion for our violent world!

Finally, we come to the HOUR of Divine Mercy, which is **3:00pm**, when Jesus breathed His last. At His death, and all was finished, Divine Mercy was poured out on the world. So from 3:00-4:00, we celebrate the Hour of Great Mercy. He asks of us to spend time, even if we can only spare a few seconds because of our duties, to console His Heart during the Hour of Mercy. If we take time to think about His loving sacrifice on the Cross during this hour, He promises, **“This is the hour of great mercy for the whole world. ... I will refuse nothing to the soul that makes a request of Me in virtue of My Passion”** (*Diary*, 1320). I have my alarm set to go off every day at 3:00 to remind me to take some time with Jesus.

I pray that you will not let this Feast Day pass by without entering more deeply into the Ocean of God’s Infinite Mercy!