



## Divine Mercy: “Have mercy on us and on the whole world”

What is Divine Mercy? We are all familiar with a president’s or governor’s pardon of a person’s sentence. But how much more has God done for us? He so loved us that he sent his only begotten son, Jesus, into the world (John 3:16). Completely unmerited by us, Jesus endured death on the cross obtaining the forgiveness of all our sins. As he promised, after three days Jesus rose from the dead obtaining the gift of eternal life for each one of us. That’s Divine Mercy.

A little bit of history about Divine Mercy Sunday. St. Faustina, who was born in 1905 and died in 1938, was a visionary religious sister whose writings were banned until the new Archbishop of her region in Poland, Karol Wojtyla of Krakow, restarted the investigation into her visions of our Blessed Lord to her. Later, as Pope John Paul II, he would canonize her as a saint, and establish in a decree dated August 3, 2002, that each year the Sunday after Easter would be designated as Divine Mercy Sunday.

Additionally, Pope John-Paul II, now Saint John-Paul II, decreed that individuals may earn a plenary indulgence on Divine Mercy Sunday. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1471), “An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven . . .” A plenary indulgence is full remission. To earn the plenary indulgence, we are to: 1) Receive Holy Communion on Divine Mercy Sunday or as soon as possible, 2) Have gone to confession either recently or plan to go as soon as possible, 3) Pray for the intentions of our Holy Father Pope Francis (one Our Father and one Hail Mary), and 4) Take part in public prayers and devotions in honor of Christ’s Divine Mercy on Divine Mercy Sunday (e.g., an hour-long adoration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament including benediction, and recitation of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy).

During a General Audience in 1999, Pope John Paul II said the "temporal" punishment that remains after forgiveness [received in confession with a priest] aimed at wiping away the "residues of sin," offering the reformed sinner the chance of complete healing through "a journey of purification" that can take place in this life or in purgatory.

When we die, we appear before the Lord for a particular judgment. We either enter the present Heaven or hell awaiting the second coming of Jesus when our bodies will rise from the grave and be reunited to our souls followed by a general judgment. The teachings about Purgatory are presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1030): “All who die in God's grace and friendship and who are indeed assured of their eternal salvation [The person is considered to be at the entrance of heaven], but who are still imperfectly purified, after death undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the full joy of heaven.” Pope Benedict XVI said (January 12, 2011) “Purgatory is like a purifying fire burning inside a person, a painful experience of regret for one's sins . . . Purgatory is a process not a place.” The Church gives the name Purgatory to this state of purification (CCC 1031),

which is entirely different from hell, which is an eternal separation from God. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith about Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence (1445) and Trent (1545-1564). This teaching about purgatory is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, mentioned in Sacred Scripture (e.g., II Maccabees 12:39-46).

In the Diary of St. Faustina, she records that Jesus asked her to write down the Divine Mercy Novena prayers (nine days) which He would dictate to her each day and she was to start this novena on Good Friday. We can join in praying the Divine Mercy Novena at 3 p.m. each day. It begins on Good Friday. The novena prayers for each day can be found on EWTN's website.

The Chaplet of Divine Mercy is based on words that welled up in the soul of St. Faustina in 1935 when she had a vision of an angel sent by God. Our Lord told St. Faustina, "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)

## **How to Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet**

The Chaplet is Prayed on a five-decade Rosary

### **1. Make the Sign of the Cross**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **2. Our Father**

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, Amen.

### **3. Hail Mary**

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death, Amen.

### **4. The Apostle's Creed**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell; on the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

**5. The Eternal Father**

Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your Dearly Beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

**6. On the Ten Small Beads of Each Decade**

For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

**7. Repeat for the remaining decades**

Saying the "Eternal Father" (5 times) on the "Our Father" beads and then (10 times) "For the sake of His sorrowful Passion" on the following "Hail Mary" beads.

**8. Conclude with Holy God (Repeat three times)**

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

*(Editor: Dr. Bob Ferrett – Image by D Casp from Pixabay - Updated April 15, 2020)*