

Companions on the Journey

April 16, 2023

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Saint John Paul II designated the Sunday after Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday. Back in the first three decades of the last century, the 1900's through the 1930's, there was a young Polish nun whose professed name was Faustina. She only lived to be thirty-three, the same number of years usually attributed to Jesus. Not that old then and surely not that old right now.

But this young woman of deep faith and intimate personal relationship with the Lord received revelations from the Lord over the years as a nun. She was a voluminous writer and recorded thoughts, feelings, conversations, observations, revelations—everything—she engaged in or received in those years. Those jottings, letters, journal entries have all been organized and published as the Diary of Sister (now Saint) Faustina. It is a thick book even with fine print. But there is so much there.

One of the intriguing things to me has always been how God will choose to work in those who are very, very young. Children especially. Even Mary was about fifteen when the Archangel Gabriel was sent from the Father in heaven to announce to her that she had been chosen as the vessel through whom the Holy One of God was to come to earth.

Mary listened and prayed and responded. In a relatively short period of time. She chose to place her trust in the Word of God as it came to her. "Let it be done to me as you say." The young Faustina had a similar heart. In the course of her young life God the Father revealed to her that He wanted his Son's unparalleled mercy, his generous and forgiving heart, to become known and ever more widely known. "Jesus, I trust in you." Faustina herself said this phrase. It became the identifiable line under the depiction of the Divine Mercy of Jesus Christ.

Sister Faustina was told to have a painting made of Jesus with two rays emanating from his chest where he was pulling back the clothing and the skin covering his heart. One of the rays emanating was gentle red and symbolized his heart, his love poured out in the Eucharist. The other ray was white, innocence and purity, also emanating from his heart. This depiction of Jesus was given to her to be made known worldwide. It was the early nineteen-thirties. The Nazis were just coming to power. The Second World War would not break out for another six years. And there would be so much blood shed. There would be no quarter given. No mercy. There was a plentiful supply of hatred and violence and disrespect and vengeance and murder—and complete lack of mercy.

Look at our own country presently. There is such animosity. No politeness. No genuine care for or concern about those with different values, mindsets, attitudes or values than the ones we have. No mercy.

But it is precisely for our time that the Divine Mercy of Jesus Christ serves to bring out hope were there is very little. Mercy can be the catalyst for the virtue of hope being born. And there is an air of hopelessness in the wind right now. Why are young marrieds and unmarrieds so hesitant to bring a new life into the world. There is not a spirit of hopefulness.

That is remedied by acting toward each person with a manner of mercy to ward those we encounter. No matter who they are or what they believe. It is not hatred which defeats an enemy. It is only love that wins. And love in the face of sin—is mercy. Come to pray this afternoon. Be reconciled to God and spend an hour in prayer. It will do your soul good.

Peace,
Msgr. McHenry