

Ask Fr James

Why is the Second Sunday after Easter called Divine Mercy Sunday?

The Sunday after Easter, the octave of Easter is celebrated as Divine Mercy Sunday (also known as the Feast of the Divine Mercy). It all started with a discovery in the secret diary of a Polish nun, Sr. Faustina Kowalska wherein she wrote that Jesus appeared to her and said: "I want the image of Divine Mercy solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter, and I want it to be venerated publicly so that every soul may know about it" - *Diary* 341. Faustina (1905 - 1938) perceives the heart of Christ as the seat of mercy and also that the heart of Christ is the instrument of union between humanity and God.

Faustina's writing remained with her congregation after her death, and as per her request, only her confessor and superiors had access to it. However, Devotion to Divine Mercy began gaining popularity when the mystical experiences of Sister Faustina which were well-guarded secret during her lifetime became published in her secret diary after her death.

The devotion was actively promoted by Pope John Paul II. On April 30, 2000, the Canonization of Faustina Kowalska took place and the Sunday after Easter was officially designated as the Sunday of the Divine Mercy by him. When Pope John Paul II beatified Sr. Faustina on April of 1993; in his homily he wrote; "Where, if not in the Divine Mercy, can the world find refuge and the light of hope?" By 1999 the Divine Mercy Sunday was being celebrated in St. Peter's Square in Rome, at which time Faustina was publically named "the great apostle of Divine Mercy." Pope John Paul II celebrated her Divine Mercy Mass in St. Peter's square before 200,000 people in 2001.

Her diary has been published and translated into different languages across the world. Her message of Jesus' "Divine Mercy"- (Jesus I trust in you) have come to be experienced as an intimate devotion to finding joy and peace. Most notably by praying:

1. the Divine Mercy Chaplet,
2. the Novena to Divine Mercy,
3. the Hour of Great Mercy, and
4. the Divine Feast of Mercy.

Over 100 million Catholics today practice the Divine Mercy devotion. There are specialized centers around the world which focus on Sr. Faustina's message of Divine Mercy. The Divine Mercy shrine and chapel in our Archdiocese is located at 484 Hamilton Street Regina and annually, on the second Sunday after Easter, all Divine Mercy Devotees gather at St. Mary's parish Regina for the Divine Mercy Mass, adoration, confession and conference speeches beginning at 1.00pm.

You may email/send your faith questions to Fr. James and he will answer them in our Sunday Bulletin