

Faith in 5 - Adults

Mercy and Divine Mercy

1. **What is mercy?** The word mercy embodies compassion, forgiveness, love, and hope. This aptly describes God’s tenderheartedness towards us, especially towards the poor, the widows, and those suffering. We have an obligation to be merciful just as Jesus was. Jesus states, “... for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me” (Mt 25:42-45). Jesus commands us to “...love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 13: 34).

2. **What are works of mercy?** Works of mercy are charitable acts towards our neighbor, poured out of God’s love through us. We become instruments of God’s love through the giving and sharing of ourselves and our resources. Through this work by God’s grace, our faith is strengthened, and we grow in holiness.

THE WORKS OF MERCY

CORPORAL & SPIRITUAL

FEED THE HUNGRY 	 INSTRUCT THE IGNORANT
GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY 	 COUNSEL THE DOUBTFUL
SHELTER THE HOMELESS 	 ADMONISH SINNERS
CLOTHE THE NAKED 	 FORGIVE OFFENSES
VISIT THE SICK 	 COMFORT THE AFFLICTED
VISIT THE IMPRISONED 	 BEAR WRONGS PATIENTLY
BURY THE DEAD 	 PRAY FOR THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

“A BIT OF MERCY MAKES THE WORLD LESS COLD AND MORE JUST” (POPE FRANCIS)  CatholicLink

The church outlines acts of corporal mercy and acts of spiritual mercy. Corporal mercy involves bodily needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter. Spiritual mercy involves showing kindness, comfort, forgiveness, and praying for someone. Here is a graphic that explains the seven facets of corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Permitted download source: <https://catholic-link.org/images/infographic-the-works-of-mercy/>

3. **What is Divine Mercy?** Divine Mercy focuses on **the gift of mercy and love given through Christ's death, burial, and resurrection**. It is only through God’s magnificent love and compassion that we are given forgiveness for our sins and the gift of eternal life.

4. **What is Divine Mercy Sunday?** It is a feast day celebrated the Sunday after Easter. Jesus appeared several times to Sister Faustina Kowalska, a Polish nun. She wrote about her conversations with Jesus in her diary which was later published. Jesus appeared to her, wearing a white garment with red and white rays radiating from His heart. Jesus told her to paint a specific image with the words, “Jesus, I trust in You”. Jesus told her to share the message of His love and mercy. He promised that those who venerated the image would not perish, especially at the hour of death. Jesus also instructed Sister Faustina that the Feast be celebrated the Sunday after Easter.

Sister Faustina's spiritual director Fr. Michal Sopocho was able to find an artist whom she commissioned, giving detailed instructions of what the image needed to look like. She was not pleased with the painting and felt it did not capture the essence and beauty of the Lord Jesus who visited her. The Lord reminded her that it was His grace that mattered.

The image shows Christ with his right hand raised and the left touching his chest. Two rays, one pale, one red – which Jesus said are to signify water and blood – are emanating from his heart. His great mercy poured out for us! Divine Mercy image(s) can be seen at the end of this posting.

Pope Saint John Paul II (hereafter referred to as Pope Saint JP II) had a great love for the Divine Mercy and worked tirelessly to promote the devotion. He authorized it to be part of the Church's liturgical calendar. On Divine Mercy Sunday in 1993, Sister Faustina was beatified by Pope Saint JP II, and in 2000, she was canonized by him in Rome, establishing the feast for the whole world. Pope Saint JP II died in 2005, on the vigil of Divine Mercy Sunday.

5. What is the Chaplet of Divine Mercy? It is a prayerful devotion to the Divine Mercy, based on the apparitions of Jesus reported by Saint Faustina known as "the Apostle of Mercy". We pray for God's mercy, affirming our trust in Him. The meditation and recitation of the chaplet compels us - through God's mercy, we must be merciful also. Saint Faustina wrote that the purpose of the chaplet's prayers for mercy is threefold: to obtain mercy, to trust in Christ's mercy, and to show mercy to others. The chaplet is said also for the sick and dying, especially at the hour of their death. Our Lord said to her, **"At the hour of their death, I defend as My own glory every soul that will say this chaplet; or when others say it for a dying person, the indulgence is the same"** (*Diary*, 811). Through the devotion, we obtain graces according to God's will.

6. How do you recite the Chaplet? The Chaplet is recited upon a five-decade rosary, with an opening and closing prayer from St. Faustina's diary. It is to be done at 3 o'clock in the afternoon but can be done at any time. Jesus also told St. Faustina to say the prayers as a novena. She began praying the novena on Good Friday, with the eighth day said for the souls in purgatory. We are encouraged to practice the novena likewise today. The YouTube link below is an opportunity for you to participate in learning and reciting the chaplet.

More information on Divine Mercy can be found on *A Catholic Mom's Life* website:

Blog: <https://acatholicmomslife.com/the-divine-mercy-novena/>

YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/Wj4cLrhuqo0>

This is a free resource! For more information, visit www.acatholicmomslife.com

Below: The image on the left is the original Divine Mercy image by the painter Eugene Kazimirowski in 1934. The more popular image on the right, was painted by Adolf Hyla in 1943.



Image Source: <https://newdailycompass.com/en/the-image-of-the-divine-mercy-will-relive-in-new-paintings>