



Transformations

An HSCC Youth Newsletter

April, 2006

Reading someone else's diary? That is so rude! But did you know studying St. Faustina's private writings just may lead you straight to God?

Poland – early 20th century

A quiet, young woman left her home against the wishes of her family and became a nun. She was sickly, had only a 3rd grade education, and humbly did her menial chores in the garden and kitchen. Her serene smile never betrayed the powerful spiritual encounters Sister Maria Faustina had with Jesus.

Sister Faustina was instructed, by both her spiritual director and Jesus Himself, to keep a diary. After her death at age 33, this diary was revealed to the world. She tells of miraculous revelations, heavenly visions, prophecy, and, most importantly, that God has Divine Mercy and will forgive our sins.

So what's the catch?

Okay, so God does ask for something in return. First, ask Him for Mercy; second, trust in His mercy; third, live His mercy. Now that's not so hard, is it? Well, maybe it would be, but Sister Mary Faustina's diary actually gives us specific guidelines for how to do these three things, including some new devotions like the Divine Mercy Chaplet, the Novena, daily prayer at 3:00 pm daily, and the celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday.

This just keeps getting better

Divine Mercy Sunday is celebrated the first Sunday after Easter. On that day our Lord promised to grant complete forgiveness of sins and punishments. It's a fresh start to get closer to God. We just need to prepare ourselves properly for this incredible occasion.

1. Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before Divine Mercy Sunday, truly repent of our sins and trust in Jesus
2. Receive the Eucharist on that Sunday
3. Hold the image of Jesus, as described by Sister Faustina, in a place of high regard
4. Be merciful to others

You might even try learning the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and praying it nine days before Divine Mercy Sunday. This is called the Novena. Start on Good Friday and you are on your way!

Raging river of love

There is nothing new in Sister Faustina's diary. It's just a powerful reminder that God's Divine Mercy is unfathomable and deserved by every single sinner. That's good news! We may think His Mercy is silent and unseen, yet it is as unstoppable as a river. It's always there if we just trust in Jesus. By the way, Sister Faustina became Saint Faustina on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 30, 2000.

Church History

Easter Trivia

You've probably heard that Pope Benedict XVI issued his first encyclical called "God is Love." Sounds great, right? But do you have any idea what an encyclical even is, or why it matters?

An encyclical is just one of many types of papal documents. Specifically, it's a letter to the world. It is meant to be a reminder of Catholic teachings, and Catholics are expected to follow those teachings.

There are other types of documents as well, like bulls (named not for the animal, but for the bubble-shaped papal seal), briefs, constitutions and letters. Before Vatican II, the document

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name indicated how important it was. Since Vatican II, it's what the document contains that shows its authority. The pope takes the time to send us a reminder of our faith, our tradition. But in our world, why should the pope even bother?

The pope bothers because popes have always bothered. Popes have been around for about 2000 years now, and, during that time, they have been leaders throughout western civilization. Their job is to teach us and to help us avoid hurting each other. Their letters remind us of Church teachings. Their words and actions show a long history of moral authority. Popes have even settled disputes between nations. In 1985 Pope John Paul II helped settle an argument between Chile and Argentina, thus avoiding a war. Even those who claim to have no religion recognize the pope as a mediator of peace.

Pope Benedict XVI wants to remind us that God is Love. That's an encyclical worth reading.

1. The Easter Triduum refers to:
 - a. Three Easter baskets we fill up during the egg hunt
 - b. The three wise men who visited the baby Jesus on Easter Sunday
 - c. Dusk on Holy Thursday to dusk on Good Friday; dusk on Good Friday to dusk on Holy Saturday, dusk on Holy Saturday to dusk on Easter Sunday
2. How many masses may you attend during the Easter Triduum (this one may be a trick question)
 - a. One – it's one long mass with some breaks to rest at home
 - b. Two – Good Friday is just a service, not a mass
 - c. Three – we should attend mass on all three days if possible
3. Which of the following is/are true regarding Holy Thursday? (circle all that apply)
 - a. Dusk signifies the end of Lent
 - b. The priest washes the feet of some parishioners
 - c. It commemorates the beginning of the sacrament of the Eucharist
4. Which of the following is/are true regarding Good Friday? (circle all that apply)
 - a. It's a day of fast and abstinence
 - b. There is no procession at the beginning of a service because mass did not really end on Thursday
 - c. We may venerate the cross to humble ourselves to Christ
5. Which of the following is/are true regarding the Easter vigil? (circle all that apply)
 - a. Scripture readings remind us of God's work in our world from creation through the resurrection
 - b. We welcome new members into our Church
 - c. We build a fire to remember Jesus is our Light in the Darkness.

Answers: 1-c; 2-a; 3, 4, & 5 – a, b, c are all correct

