

God Who is Rich in Mercy

Meditations and Prayers
to The Divine Mercy

GOD WHO IS RICH IN MERCY

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to The Divine Mercy

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FRANCIS CARDINAL MACHARSKI METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOP OF CRACOW

God, who is rich in mercy – these words from the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians became the introduction of Pope John Paul II's second encyclical on the mercy of God (*Dives in Misericordia*, 1981). The Pope shows us an increasingly mature way of relating to the Father and His love; thus, he is leading us to Christ, because the revelation of love and mercy in the history of man has only one shape and one name – it is called Jesus Christ (thus wrote the Holy Father in his first encyclical about the Redeemer of man).

We welcome with joy this collection of reflections and prayers published by the Sanctuary of The Divine Mercy in Cracow-Łagiewniki. These texts came into being long ago; they were written by the pen of the Servant of God, Sister Faustina, whose temporal remains rest there, next to the image of The Divine Mercy.

It is good that, in accordance with the spirit of the Church, these reflections and prayers flow out of sound teachings of belief in Divine Mercy. They testify to God's mercy and encourage deeds of mercy. Indeed, this is how Pope John Paul II defines the place of Divine Mercy in the Church's mission: the Church professes God's mercy and proclaims it, the Church strives to act in mercy. The Holy Father defines the Church's most urgent prayer in the following way: the Church cries out to the mercy of God.

Therefore, let the light and the power of the Holy Spirit rest upon all people who attempt to carry on this prayer of the Church in our time! I bless with all my heart the publishers of this devotional, the sisters of the Łagiewniki Sanctuary, and everyone who will introduce these texts into their prayer life.

Franciszek Cardinal Macharski

Cracow, the 6th day of February, 1990

Foreword

to the First Edition

Dear devotees, the collection of prayers to The Divine Mercy, which we are handing over to you, was produced at the initiative of Cardinal Francis Macharski. Seeing the tremendous need for this kind of publication, the shepherd – in his pastoral concern – brought this compilation into being. We hope that the contents of this book the reflections, prayers, songs, and the numerous quotes from the Holy Bible, from Church documents, and from the *Little Diary* of Blessed Sister Faustina Kowalska – will bring people closer to the flowing source of the Savior’s mercy. At the same time, we want to remind everyone that no one is bound by conscience to accept the contents of Sister Faustina’s *Diary* on faith, as if it were Church dogma.

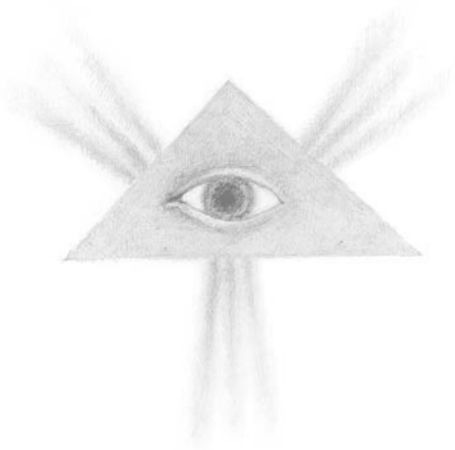
The authors of the collection realize the imperfections of this work; but if they have chosen to publish it in spite of those imperfections, they do so for the reasons mentioned above and also out of their concern that the uniformity of this devotion be preserved. We hope it will enrich the prayers and devotions offered to The Divine Mercy, who is so widely honored among the faithful.

It would give us great joy if this work met with favorable acceptance and contributed to even greater growth of devotion to The Divine Mercy, which is so needed in our contemporary world.

At this point, we also would like to thank everyone who in any way contributed to the work of assembling this devotional book-let; we are especially grateful to Fr. Stanislaus Ziemiński, S. J.

The Authors

*God
Who is Rich in Mercy*



For I the Lord, your God, am...
bestowing mercy down to the thousandth generation,
on the children of those who love me and
keep my commandments (Ex 20:5).

God is Love and Mercy

“Your Father is merciful” (Lk 6:36).

Our God called Himself by the name of “Love”. It is an eternal love, everlasting and unchanging, which manifested itself in the act of the creation of man, in the covenant on Mt. Sinai, in the history of Israel... We would know nothing about it, if it hadn't been revealed in the Old and New Testament. Jesus Christ is the fullest manifestation of God's love toward men. This is why St. John the Evangelist writes explicitly, “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8).

God loves each man and turns to each one with unlimited and undivided love. This is why we can all say to Him, “Abba – my Father.” Moreover, this is how Jesus told us to address God when He taught us the prayer, “Our Father, who art in heaven...”

God is love. Encompassing all creatures, especially man and his misery, this love is, indeed, His mercy. We call “merciful” a person who has pity on the misery of others and helps them as much as possible to emerge from their wretchedness by

fulfilling their various needs. This is why Jesus, in His teaching, strongly emphasizes this attribute of God: “Your Father is merciful” (Lk 6:36). Our Holy Father John Paul II wrote: “Especially through His lifestyle and through His actions, Jesus revealed that *love is present in the world* in which we live – an effective love, a love that addresses itself to man and embraces everything that makes up his humanity. This love makes itself particularly noticed in contact with suffering, injustice and poverty; in contact with the whole historical «human condition,» which in various ways manifests man’s limitations and frailty, both physical and moral. It is precisely the mode and sphere in which love manifests itself that in biblical language is called «mercy.»

Christ, then, reveals God who is Father, who is «love,» as St. John will express in his first letter; Christ reveals God as «rich in mercy,» as we read in St. Paul. This truth is not just a subject of a teaching; it is a reality made present to us by Christ. *Making the Father present as love and mercy is, in Christ’s own consciousness, the fundamental touchstone of His mission as the Messiah*” (Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Dives in Misericordia*, 1981, n.3).

My Heart rejoices in this title of Mercy – said the Lord Jesus to Sr. Faustina – Proclaim that mercy is the greatest attribute of God. All the works of My hands are crowned with mercy (301). My mercy is so great, that no mind, be it of man or of angel, will be able to fathom it throughout all eternity (699). Tell aching mankind to snuggle close to My merciful Heart, and I will fill it with peace (1074). Let all mankind recognize My unfathomable mercy. It is a sign for the end times; after it will come the day of justice. While there is still time, let them have recourse to the fount of My mercy; let them profit from the Blood and Water which gushed forth for them (848).

After Holy Communion, my soul was immersed in the Godhead. I was united to the Three Divine Persons in such a way that when I was united to Jesus, I was simultaneously united to the Father and to the Holy Spirit. My soul was flooded with joy beyond understanding, and the Lord gave me to experience the whole ocean and abyss of His fathomless mercy. Oh, if only souls would want to understand how much God loves them! All comparisons, even if they were the most tender and the most vehement, are but a mere shadow when set against the reality (1073).

O Most Holy Trinity!

As many times as I breathe,

as many times as my heart beats,

as many times as my blood pulsates through my body,

*so many thousand times do I want to glorify Your
mercy (163).*

Divine Mercy *in the Creation of the World*

“But you, our God, are good and true, slow to anger, and governing all with mercy” (Wis 15:1).

The world in which we live comes from God. He is its Creator and Lord. He founded the stars, the earth, the plants and the animals. He created the universe, and He constantly maintains it in being. We encounter the Creator’s active work everywhere in the world: in the journeys of the stars, in our solar system, in the day and in the night, in the flow and ebb of the sea, and in each life.

Christians, and also followers of other religions, believe that the world is the work of God, not of some accident. It is the work of ageless Wisdom, Love and Mercy. The Lord God is perfect and full of bliss without the world. Why, then, did He create it? God made the world out of love and out of endless mercy. In creating the world, God revealed His perfection, His wisdom, His omnipotence, and

His goodness. In addition, He wanted to share His glory and His happiness with His creatures.

In many places the Holy Bible explicitly tells us that God created the world from His mercy. “All the paths of the Lord are faithful love (mercy)” (Ps 25:10). At this point, the psalmist speaks in general terms about all the works of God, including the work of creation. In Psalm 136 the inspired songwriter mentions particular works of God as works of Divine Mercy, and he mentions first and foremost the creation of the universe: “Praise the Lord who is so good, God’s love endures forever. Who spread the earth upon the waters, God’s love endures forever. Who made the great lights, God’s love endures forever. The sun to rule the day, God’s love endures forever...” (cf. Ps 136:1, 5-8).

Many Biblical texts express joy over the work of creation and God’s care for it. The Merciful God constantly shows concern for His creatures; He wants them to be able to achieve their purpose. Every detail of the visible world reveals the compassionate guardianship of God, every being proclaims with the inspired sage, “for you love all things that are and loathe nothing that you have made” (Wis 11:24).

I was carried in spirit before the throne of God – writes Sr. Faustina – There I saw the heavenly Powers which incessantly praise God. Beyond the throne I saw a brightness inaccessible to creatures, and there only the Incarnate Word enters as Mediator. When Jesus entered this light, I heard these words, Write down at once what you hear: I am the Lord in My essence and am immune to orders or needs. If I call creatures into being – that is the abyss of My mercy (85).

O God, how generously Your mercy is spread everywhere, and You have done all this for man. Oh, how much You must love him, since Your love is so active on his behalf. O my Creator and Lord, I see on all sides the trace of Your hand and the seal of Your mercy, which embraces all created things. O my most compassionate Creator, I want to give You worship on behalf of all creatures and all inanimate creation; I call on the whole universe to glorify Your mercy. Oh, how great is Your goodness, O God! (1749).

Divine Mercy in the Creation of Man

“Then God said: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gn 1:26).

An even more remarkable act of God’s Mercy is the creation of man in His image and likeness. In truth, man is “of the clay of the ground” (Gn 2:7), he is “Adam, meaning man of clay”; nevertheless, he also has a spiritual element – the soul. He is the image of God. For, thanks to reason and will, he soars above all creatures, up to the throne of God. Next to the angels, man is the only one who can recognize his Creator. Man is the only one who can love and serve God of his own choice. The psalmist praises God for this masterpiece of creation: “When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars you set in place – what are humans that you are mindful of them, mere mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them little less than a god, crowned them with glory and honor. You have

given them rule over the works of your hands” (Ps 8:4-7).

We know from Jesus that God did not want to be man’s Creator alone. He also desired to be his Father (cf. Mt 6:26). He did not want man to be merely a creature on the same level as the rest of the visible world, but He wanted to make man His real child, albeit adopted. He wanted man to draw near to Him, not in fear and trepidation, but with the utmost trust and love, just as a child comes to his father. We must accept this truth as proof of God’s great mercy, and fall in love with it. This truth proclaims the misery and the greatness of man, the two faces of his being.

When man worships God and serves Him faithfully, he also works for himself: he achieves the end for which he was created. Man is created in order to praise God, to honor Him and serve Him; and in doing that, to save himself. In His mercy, God ordained that in serving Him, man simultaneously rewards himself, because it brings about his salvation, that is, his union with God.

Know, My daughter – said the Lord Jesus to Sr. Faustina – *that between you and Me there is a bot-*

tomless abyss, an abyss that separates the Creator from the creature. But this abyss is filled with My mercy. I raise you up to Myself, not that I have need of you, but it is solely out of mercy that I grant you the grace of union with Myself (1576).

God, who in your mercy have deigned to call man from nothingness into being, generously have You bestowed upon him nature and grace. But that seemed too little for Your infinite goodness. In Your mercy, O Lord, You have given us everlasting life. You admit us to Your everlasting happiness and grant us to share in Your interior life. And You do this solely out of Your mercy. You bestow on us the gift of Your grace, only because You are good and full of love. You had no need of us at all to be happy, but You, O Lord, want to share Your own happiness with us... May Your mercy be glorified, O Lord; we will praise it for endless ages (1743).

Divine Mercy in the Work of Redemption

“But however much sin increased, grace was always greater” (Rom 5:20).

In spite of a great inheritance in the order of nature and grace, man rebelled against his Creator, the best of fathers, at the very beginning of his history. The Holy Bible points this out to us when it tells us the story of Adam and Eve’s disobedience in Paradise.

The sin that Adam and Eve committed deprived them of God’s friendship, the privilege of enjoying their Creator’s presence and union with Him in eternity. This sin also darkened man’s mind and weakened his will. Thus, the first withdrawal of man from God occurred. Man said “no” to God and wanted to determine his lot without God’s help. He stopped serving God in order to serve sin; he chose death, not life. And so, “It was through one man that sin came into the world, and through sin, death, and

thus death has spread through the whole human race because everyone has sinned” (Rom 5:12). And it would have come to final and eternal disaster if the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, did not come into the world.

In Jesus Christ, God drew near to man once again in order to save him from eternal damnation. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him” (Jn 3:16-17).

The Incarnation of the Word of God

“And the Word became flesh, and made his dwelling among us” (Jn 1:14). The Divine Mercy is revealed in the Incarnation of the Son of God, in this most magnificent gift that God offered to sinful humanity. The Son of God became man and was born of the Virgin Mary; He became poor in order to enrich us with His poverty; He became the Son of man, so men could become children of God; He became a Brother, so men would love each other as brothers; and above all, He opened the way to His Father.

Jesus Christ not only lived on earth, but also powerfully proclaimed the good news that man can come back to God. He healed the sick and brought the dead to life, He forgave sinners... That is, He revealed the presence of God the Father, *who is rich in mercy!*

The Passion, Death and Resurrection

Although Jesus' entire life was "one great love and mercy for men," the supreme moment in which this love fully revealed itself occurred at His passion and death on the cross. Practically speaking, this event signified that Love had endured the betrayal of His friend – Judas – and the denial of His earthly successor – Peter. It meant rejection by His own nation, a sentence which condemned Him of blasphemy, and in the end, a most demeaning death among criminals on the wood of the cross. It was then that Jesus, aware of having accomplished His mission, could say, "It is fulfilled!" The revelation of the Father's love and mercy had reached its culmination.

In Jesus' death on the cross, Saint John the Evangelist and St. Paul the Apostle perceive, above all, the mystery of merciful love. It is the mystery

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