



Trust

WITH SAINT FAUSTINA

ON THE PATHS
OF DIVINE MERCY

SAINT FAUSTINA

HELENA KOWALSKA
(1905–1938)

Tell souls not to place within their own hearts obstacles to My mercy, which so greatly wants to act within them. My mercy works in all those hearts which open their doors to it. Both the sinner and the righteous person have need of My mercy. Conversion, as well as perseverance, is a grace of My mercy (Diary 1577).



What is there in Saint Faustina's life and mission that can be interesting for us? What is the purpose of spending our time on the writings of someone who has been dead for many years? Does an ordinary, uneducated, early 20th century nun have a message relevant to people living in a global village? Our individual answers to these questions might truly surprise us, despite initial impressions to the contrary.

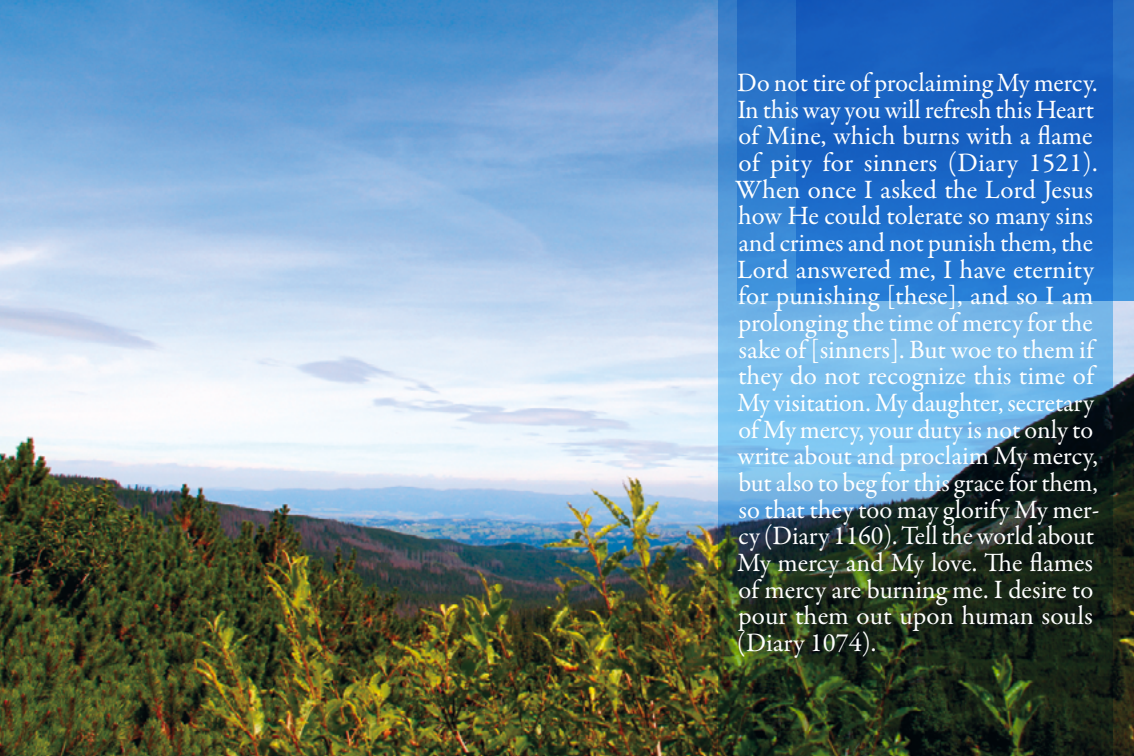
Before joining the convent, Helena Kowalska was an ordinary girl with extraordinary dreams. From a very early age, she was, generally speaking, interested in God's affairs. She dreamed of becoming a hermit and had a presentiment that she would spend her life serving God. It was no surprise, therefore, that she earnestly desired to enter a convent. However, it was not quite that simple.

First, her parents refused. Then, she herself decided to live a worldly life and stop thinking about her vocation. Still, she could not ignore the call of God, and at the age of twenty she entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, where she spent thirteen years. She did not do anything special in the convent—worked, like other sisters, experiencing everyday joys along with suffering. However, her very ordinary and simple life concealed an extraordinarily deep personal relationship with God, who chose her to remind the whole world that He is a good, merciful God, loving every single one of us.

Hers was not an easy mission. In the beginning, it frightened Sister Faustina and caused her a lot of anxiety. Yet, her trust in God allowed her to persevere through difficult moments, and with the help of others, she was able to fulfill the desires of Jesus, though some of them were realized only after her death. Sister Faustina became ill with tuberculosis, which was incurable at the time, and died at the young age of thirty-three. She recorded her encounters with Jesus and His desires in a few notebooks, which we read today as her Diary. The story of this remarkably simple Sister's holiness circulated for many years, culminating in her beatification and canonization.

Nowadays, millions have heard of her, and pilgrims from all over the world visit her grave at Łagiewniki on the outskirts of Cracow. They know that her presence in heaven can help obtain for them all the graces that they need, and that she can assist them with difficult problems. At times, she is there merely to listen and console. It is with good reason she thus became known as everyone's SISTER.

The center of Sister Faustina's life, which today is the core of her mission, is the mystery of the Divine Mercy: the truth about God being a loving Father who wants real, everlasting happiness for every person.



Do not tire of proclaiming My mercy. In this way you will refresh this Heart of Mine, which burns with a flame of pity for sinners (Diary 1521). When once I asked the Lord Jesus how He could tolerate so many sins and crimes and not punish them, the Lord answered me, I have eternity for punishing [these], and so I am prolonging the time of mercy for the sake of [sinners]. But woe to them if they do not recognize this time of My visitation. My daughter, secretary of My mercy, your duty is not only to write about and proclaim My mercy, but also to beg for this grace for them, so that they too may glorify My mercy (Diary 1160). Tell the world about My mercy and My love. The flames of mercy are burning me. I desire to pour them out upon human souls (Diary 1074).

THE DIVINE MERCY DEVOTION

I desire trust from My creatures. Encourage souls to place great trust in My fathomless mercy. Let the weak, sinful soul have no fear to approach Me, for even if it had more sins than there are grains of sand in the world, all would be drowned in the unmeasurable depths of My mercy (Diary 1059).

Devotion means everything connected to our worship of God. However, the focus should not only be on external forms of worship; instead, emphasis should be on our internal attitude in the presence of God. In regard to devotion to the Divine Mercy, trust in God and showing mercy to our neighbor are both absolutely essential.

Through Sister Faustina, the Lord Jesus presented us with new forms of the devotion by which we can obtain the graces of His mercy. These are: the image of Christ, with the inscription, "Jesus, I trust in You"; the Feast of the Divine Mercy, celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter; the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy; and, the Hour of Mercy. God, in His love, always anticipates man's response, and so attached many graces not only to these forms of devotion, on which we will expand later, but also promised His special blessing to those who encourage others to trust in His great mercy.

I gave the Savior to the world; as for you, you have to speak to the world about His great mercy and prepare the world for the Second Coming (...). Speak to souls about this great mercy while it is still the time for [granting] mercy (Diary 635).



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