

Learn Your Faith...A Weekly Educational Column.

Divine Mercy Sunday

Among the various legitimate forms of popular devotion is the **Chaplet of Divine Mercy**. According to a recent Church document (Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy) “[G]enuine forms of popular piety, expressed in a multitude of different ways, derive from the faith and, therefore, must be valued and promoted. Such authentic expressions of popular piety are not at odds with the centrality of the Sacred Liturgy. Rather, in promoting the faith of the people, who regard popular piety as a natural religious expression, they predispose the people for the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries.”

Devotion to the Divine Mercy was promoted by Sr. Faustina Kowalska who was canonized by Pope John Paul II on April 30, 2000. The many aspects of devotion to the Divine Mercy culminate in the Liturgical Feast celebrated on the Second Sunday of Easter, also known as Divine Mercy Sunday. The Congregation for Divine Worship decreed (May 23, 2000) that “throughout the world, the second Sunday of Easter will receive the name Divine Mercy Sunday, a perennial invitation the Christian world to face, with confidence in divine benevolence, the difficulties and trials that humankind will experience in the years to come.” Perhaps the most popular of the forms of devotion to the Divine Mercy is the “Chaplet of Divine Mercy”. Prayed on ordinary rosary beads, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy is an intercessory prayer that extends the offering of the Eucharist, so it is especially appropriate to use it after having received Holy Communion at Holy Mass. It may be said at any time, but our Lord specifically told St. Faustina to recite it during the nine days before the Feast of Divine Mercy (Second Sunday of Easter). It is likewise appropriate to pray the chaplet during the “Hour of Great Mercy”, i.e. three o’clock each afternoon (recalling the time of Christ’s death on the Cross). In His revelations to St. Faustina, Our Lord asked for a special remembrance of His Passion at that hour.

Recitation of the Chaplet on ordinary rosary beads begins with an “Our Father”, a “Hail, Mary” and the Apostles’ Creed. Then, on the large beads before each decade is said: “**Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for my sins and those of the whole world.**” On the 10 small beads of each decade is said: “**For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.**” The concluding doxology (after the five decades) is repeated three times: “**Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.**”

[Sources: Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy (JP II address #2); Ordo for the Diocese of Hartford 2004, p. 99-100; The Divine Mercy Message and Devotion, MIC (booklet)].