



Podcast Divine Mercy Novena Good Friday: Friday 2nd April – 10th April 2021
Mgr Daniel McHugh

Journey of Faith - Life from Holy Mass - with Monsignor Daniel McHugh

Hello, I am Monsignor Daniel McHugh.

I first became conscious of the Divine Mercy Devotion when I was Director of Maryvale. It was our policy to welcome promotion of Popular Devotions, providing they were in accordance to Church Teaching. As the place where public devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus began in England in the time of Bishop Milner it was natural that we be open to this Devotion, especially as it had the approbation of Pope St John Paul II.

The Divine Mercy Devotion was initiated by a Religious Sister from Poland, Maria Faustyna Kowalska. She entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in 1925. In visions she received from Jesus the commission to herald the Mercy of God. She was to do this first through having a picture of Jesus painted on which rays emanated from the Sacred Heart. I was surprised, when I visited Lithuania in the 1990s to find the Church where the first image was displayed over the Altar; I hadn't realized that part of present-day Lithuania was Poland at that time. The image of the Merciful Jesus, which was then painted (1934) bears the signature: "Jesus, I trust in you". It was a special joy to celebrate Mass at that Altar.

Sr Faustyna was also instructed to honour the hour of Jesus death with a Devotion that included the Rosary of Divine Mercy. Hence Good Friday at 3pm when we commemorate the Passion and Death of Our Lord, is a special moment for devotees. According to the visions, she was also asked to work for the introduction of a "Sunday of Divine Mercy" into the Church Year, and that now takes place on the Second Sunday of Easter, at the conclusion of the Novena.

Sr Faustyna died in Krakow in 1938 and was Canonized on April 30th 2000, and at the same time Pope John Paul II stipulated the Sunday after Easter as the Sunday when Divine Mercy is celebrated. Pope St John Paul had written his second encyclical letter *Dives in Misericordia* in 1980 and it began "God who is full of Mercy". In April 2015 Pope Francis proclaimed in *Misericordiae Vultus* (The Face of Mercy) an extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy (8 December 2015 – 20 November 2016) in which he remembered "The Great Apostle of Mercy". The Pope spoke of the Holy Door of St Peter's open for this Jubilee, as a "Door of Mercy through which anyone who enters will experience the love of God, who consoles, pardons and instils hope".

In the New Testament God's Mercy is revealed and expressed in the words and deeds of Jesus. It is an extension of, and expression of love, and is shown especially in Jesus' choice to go through His Passion and Crucifixion to lead us to new life.

Monsignor Daniel McHugh

Co-ordinator for Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese



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In my Parish we chose to celebrate a new stained glass surround to the Baptismal Font, to mark the Year of Mercy, seeing the Sacrament of Baptism as a free gift of God, a Divine gift that we do not merit, but a gift that inspires us as to a response of mercy in our dealings with others. The Sacrament of Penance, Confession, is where most Adult Catholics know and experience God's free gift of merciful forgiveness and healing: we are called to that Sacrament at Easter.

Reading taken from the Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday) Year A: 1 Peter 1: 3-9)

Prayer taken from the Collect of the Second Sunday of Easter.

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