

The Image of the Divine Mercy

“By means of this image I shall be granting many graces to souls; so, let every soul have access to it. “ (Diary, 570)

WEEK THREE



This is the original painting done by the Polish artist, Eugeniusz Kazimirowski

We all have an image of the merciful Jesus. Once we have seen it, we fall in love with it, and take it home, right? But have we asked ourselves where it comes from, its meaning and its importance for our salvation? Today, I will speak to you about this image, even if I am not worthy to touch so much sublimity, fine thought and fruit of the infinite love that God has for you, for me, for us, for humanity.

The image of Merciful Jesus is one of the best known images of Christ crucified and risen in the history of the Church, and in the contemporary world. It is an extraordinary painting, not only because it is the most widespread, but above all because the model, posing for this painting, is the same Lord Jesus who showed himself in these forms to Sister Faustina in the cell of the convent of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mercy in Plock on the 22nd February of the year 1931, and he ordered to paint his image, according to that vision. In the evening, standing in the cell – Sister Faustina related this event in her "Diary" - I saw the Lord Jesus dressed in a white robe: one hand raised to bless, while the other touched the robe on the chest, which slightly moved away and let out two large rays, both red and pale. (...) After a moment, Jesus said to me: "Paint an image according to the model you see, with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You! I want this image to be venerated first in your chapel, and then throughout the world" (Diary 47).

The image was therefore born by the will of Jesus himself. It is a sign and at the same time the synthesis of the whole message of Divine Mercy, transmitted through Saint Sister Faustina, as on the one hand, it recalls the truth of God's merciful love for man,

manifested in the papers of the Old Testament and calls for the formation of a Christian attitude of trust towards him and mercy towards one's neighbor; on the other hand, it also acts as a vessel for drawing graces, to which Jesus tied many promises. To the prayer expressed with faith before this image, combined with the works of mercy towards one's neighbor, Jesus tied a general promise of many graces and earthly blessings (provided they conform to the divine will), and he also tied particular promises of salvation, of great progress on the way to Christian perfection, and the grace of a peaceful death.

The first image of the Divine Mercy was painted in the workshop of a Vilnius artist, Eugeniusz Kazimirowski, under the supervision of Sister Faustina in the year 1934. Since then, many versions of the image of the Merciful Christ have been painted, painted according to the vision of Sister Faustina, and which are in churches and chapels all over the world.

As you know, dear listeners, many versions of this image have been painted, but our Lord has made it clear that the painting itself is not what is important. When St. Faustina saw for the first time the image that was being painted under her direction, she wept with disappointment and complained to Jesus: "Who will paint you as beautiful as you are?" (313).

In response, she heard these words: "The greatness of this image is not found in the beauty of the color, nor of the brush, but in my grace" (313).

So, no matter which version of the image we prefer, we can be assured that it is a vehicle of God's grace, if it is revered with confidence in his mercy.

However, the image has a special place in this iconography and in the cult of Divine Mercy, famous for the graces bestowed, in the convent's chapel of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mercy in the Sanctuary of Divine Mercy in Krakow-Łagiewniki.



The most popular version of the image of the Divine Mercy



The Roman centurion Longinus piercing the heart of Jesus, making sure He was dead.

The words of Jesus came true: I wish this image to be venerated first in your chapel, and then in the whole world (Diary 47), although that painting was neither the first image painted under the supervision of Sister Faustina, nor the first image exhibited in the chapels of the Congregation. This image of Christ is highly praised by the faithful, it is famous for the many graces bestowed and its copies and reproductions can be found on all continents of the world.

The Lord Jesus also clarified some elements of the image of this painting in some apparitions in Vilnius in the year 1934, when the first image was painted based on Płock's vision in the studio of Eugeniusz Kazimirowski under the supervision of Sister Faustina. When asked about the meaning of the rays, Jesus replied: The rays represent Blood and Water. The pale ray represents the Water that justifies souls; the red ray represents the Blood which is life for souls ... Both rays came out from the depths of My Mercy, when on the cross My Heart, already in agony, was torn open with the spear. (D. 299). So it seems inappropriate to paint this ray as a light spreading in all directions, even upward. These rays come out of the robe slightly displaced on the chest in the heart area, but in the image the heart of Jesus remains invisible.

The inscription at the feet: Jesus, I trust in You! it is one of the

essential elements integrally linked to this image. The confessor of Sister Faustina in Vilnius, who did his utmost to paint the first image, asked Sister Faustina if other words could be signed, for example: "Christ, King of Mercy" (D. 88). Jesus reminded me - she noted on the pages of the "Diary" - what He had told me the first time, and that is, that these three words had to be highlighted. The words are these: Jesus, I trust in You! I understood that Jesus wanted this sentence to be written at the bottom of the painting. (D. 327).

What is important for the message of Mercy, that Jesus transmitted through Sister Faustina, including also the image of Divine Mercy, was written in his "Diary". This is confirmed by the words of Jesus spoken to Sister Faustina at the end of her life: "Be quiet, My daughter, this work of Mercy is Mine, there is nothing of yours in it. I am happy that you faithfully carry out what I have recommended to you, you have not added or removed a single word" (D. 1667). With such detailed instructions, it is known how to paint the image of Merciful Jesus, and despite this, many wrong images have been painted. Most of the time the words placed under the writing of the image are left out: Jesus, I trust in You!. Sometimes you can see the Heart or the crown on the head painted to underline, how the rays had come out of the Heart, and that the Jesus represented is the King of Mercy. You can also find reproductions of the face of Jesus alone, under which the inscription: Jesus, I trust in You! Is placed. Alongside the painted images of Merciful Jesus, sculptures, bas-reliefs or images made with modern techniques can also be observed. However, only painted pictures should be destined for worship, because the Lord Jesus indicated this type of image when he said: Paint an image according to the model you see, with the following written: Jesus, I trust in You! (D. 47).

While still alive, Sister Faustina received the reassurance from the Lord Jesus that this image would attract many souls to God and that Divine Mercy would act on souls through him (cf. D. 1379). In April 1938 she wrote in the "Diary": Today I saw the glory of God that spreads from this image. Many souls receive graces, although they do not speak out loud. Although His vicissitudes are of various kinds, God obtains glory through Him, and the efforts of satan and wicked men will be shattered and annihilated. Despite the anger of satan, the Divine Mercy will triumph over the whole world, and will have the cult of all souls (D. 1789).

Dear readers, I am sure that the next time you look at this image, you will look at it gently, and at the same time you will feel a loving squeeze in your heart. It is the good Jesus who, returning your love for him, whispers to you: I love you.



Saint Faustina holding the original imagine of Jesus of the Divine Mercy, painted by the Polish artist.

Readings from the Diary of Saint Faustina, regarding the image of the Divine Mercy

47 In the evening, while I was in my cell, I saw the Lord Jesus dressed in a white robe. One hand [was] raised as if to give a blessing, the other touched the dress to the chest. Two large rays emanated from under the dress, slightly open to the breast, one red, the other pale. In silence I kept my gaze fixed on the Lord; my soul was struck by fear, but also by great joy. After a while, Jesus said to me: "Paint an image as you see me, with the inscription: Jesus, I trust in You. I want this image to be venerated, first in your chapel, and [then] throughout the world. .

48 I promise that the soul that venerates this image will not perish. I also promise victory over [his] enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I myself will defend it as my own glory. "

49 When I told my confessor, I received this as an answer: "This refers to your soul". He told me: "Of course, paint the image of God in your soul." When I came out of the confessional, I heard words like these again: my image is already in your soul. I want there to be a feast of Mercy. I want this image, which you will paint with brushes, to be solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter; that Sunday must be the feast of mercy.

299. When, on one occasion, my confessor told me to ask the Lord Jesus for the meaning of the two rays in the image, I replied: "Very well, I will ask the Lord." During the prayer, I felt these words within me : the two rays indicate Blood and Water. The pale ray represents the water that makes souls righteous. The red ray represents the Blood which is the life of souls. These two rays emerged from the depths of my tender mercy when my agonized heart was opened by a spear on the cross. These rays protect souls from my Father's wrath. Happy is he who will stay in their refuge, because God's righteous hand will not take him. I want the first Sunday after Easter to be the feast of Mercy.

313 + Once, when I was visiting the artist [Eugene Kazimirowski] who was painting the picture, and I saw that he was not as beautiful as Jesus, I felt very sad, but I hid this deep in my heart. When we left the artist's house, Mother Superior [Irene] stayed in town to take care of some chores while I was returning home alone. I immediately went to the chapel and cried a lot. I said to the Lord, "Who will paint you as beautiful as you are?" Then I heard these words: it is not in the beauty of the color, nor of the brush where the greatness of this image is, but in my grace.

327 Once my confessor [Father Sopocko] asked me where the inscription should be placed, because there was not enough space in the photo for everything. I replied: "I will pray and I will give you an answer next week." When I left the confessional and was passing the Blessed Sacrament, I received an internal understanding of the inscription. Jesus reminded me of what he had told me the first time; that is, that these three words must be clearly in evidence: "Jesus, I trust in You." ["Jezu, Ufam Tobie."] I understood that Jesus wanted the whole formula to be there, but He did not give me direct orders where put it as he did for these three words. I am offering people a vessel with which they will continue to come for graces to the source of mercy. That vessel is this image with the signature: "Jesus, I trust in You."

341 November 5th, 1 934. One morning, when it was my turn to open the gate to let our people out delivering baked goods, I entered the chapel to visit Jesus for a minute and to renew the intentions of the day. Today, Jesus, I offer you all my sufferings, mortifications and prayers for the intentions of the Holy Father, so that you can approve the feast of mercy. But, Jesus, I still have a word to say to you; I am very surprised that you ask me to talk about this feast of mercy, because they tell me that there is already such a feast so why should I talk about it? And Jesus said to me: And who knows anything about this feast? Nobody! Even those who are supposed to proclaim My mercy and teach people often don't know it themselves. That is why I want the image to be solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter, and I want it to be publicly venerated so that every soul can know it.

414 On Good Friday, at three in the afternoon, when I entered the chapel, I heard these words: I want the image to be publicly (173) honoured. So I saw the Lord Jesus die on the Cross in the midst of great sufferings and out of the Heart of Jesus I come the same two rays as in the image.

INVITATION

After we learned how important it is to venerate the image of the Divine Mercy for one's own salvation, here are some questions, so we can ponder where we stand on this challenge.

1. What do the rays represent? (Diary, 299)
2. Why is it important to receive the sacraments of Mercy (Eucharist and confession) frequently?
3. What problems in our daily life can prevent us from accepting the graces of his mercy? Why should we have his image at home or in the workplace?