



St. Leo The Great

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Pastor: Father Mounir El-Rassi

Parish Secretary: Magda Nowak 905-655-3286 ext. 1001

OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesday & Thursday 8 am to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Monday, Wednesday & Friday by appointment only.

DAILY MASS SCHEDULE:

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday at 8:30 a.m.
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament – Friday 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (followed by 8:30 a.m. Mass)

SUNDAY MASS SCHEDULE:

Saturday 4:30 p.m. Youth Mass
Sunday 9:00 a.m. (with Children's Liturgy JK, SK, Grade 1 & 2) & 11:00 a.m.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:

Saturdays 3:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. or anytime by appointment.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM:

Please download the Baptism Information Kit and Registration Form from
the parish website, www.stleothegreat.ca

SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE:

The Archdiocese of Toronto requires that you contact your parish priest at least one year
in advance of the planned date of your wedding and that you participate in a marriage
preparation course. Please call the Parish Office.

PARISH REGISTRATION:

All families attending St. Leo's are requested to register with the parish.
Registration forms are available in the vestibule of the church.

LOCAL HOSPITALS AND EMERGENCY PASTORAL VISITATION

If you or someone in your family is in the Oshawa, Whitby or Port Perry Hospitals and would like to have a priest (for serious reasons) visit the person who is sick for Anointing of the Sick, Last Rites, Confession or Communion, please note that there is a full-time Catholic Priest assigned to these three hospitals at various times of the week. Simply ask hospital staff to inquire as to whether *Hospital Chaplain* is present in the hospital (or when he will be). If the Hospital Chaplain is not available and there is an emergency requiring a Catholic priest, please call St. Leo the Great Parish at 905-655-3286 and when prompted, press "8" and leave your message. Fr. Mounir will receive your message (if he is available) and return your call. If there is no emergency but you would like to speak to Fr. Mounir, please call the parish office and leave a message with the parish secretary at 905-655-3286 ext. 1001.

What Is Divine Mercy?



Divine Mercy has been called "the greatest grassroots movement in the history of the Catholic Church" and has changed millions of lives. But what is it? The following is drawn from Fr. Michael Gaitley's book *Divine Mercy Explained*.

The Message of Divine Mercy

The message of Divine Mercy is something that's most associated with a Polish nun who died in 1938, about a year before the start of World War II. She's known today as St. Maria Faustina Kowalska. Saint Faustina was a mystic. In other words, she received extraordinary experiences of the Lord Jesus in prayer. In fact, Jesus appeared to her and even spoke with her. Of course, Jesus didn't reveal some new Gospel when he appeared to St. Faustina. He already revealed everything He needed to say 2,000 years ago to the Apostles and through Sacred Scripture. So, why did He do it? Why did He appear to Faustina? Actually, why does He appear to any mystic for that matter? God sometimes appears to mystics because He has a prophetic message for a particular time in history, and He uses particular men and women to share His message. Sometimes it's to remind us of something that's been forgotten. Sometimes it's a warning. At other times, it's a message of comfort. Or it may simply be a call to conversion. Whatever it is, it doesn't change the Bible. Rather, it brings us back to it at a certain time in history. Okay, so what's the particular and important message that God wants to give to us in our modern time through St. Faustina? Simple. He wants to remind us of the heart of Sacred Scripture, namely, *His mercy for us sinners*. In fact, He's saying to us sinners, "Now is the time of mercy. Now is a time of extraordinary mercy! Now is a time when I want give especially great graces to the human race. I want to pour out My mercy in a big way." Why would God say this? Why would He want to give such great graces in our time? Blessed John Paul II explained it best. First, he pointed out something we all know: namely, that there are all kinds of blessings in our contemporary society. For instance, modern technology has done so much to make life easier for us. Just think of e-mail, cell phones, smartphones, and air-conditioning. All these things are blessings. Yet, in the midst of these blessings and in some ways because of the very same advances in technology that brought them, John Paul would say that evil has a reach and power in our day like never before. Indeed, our time, sadly, is marked by unprecedented evil. Despite this, John Paul would also say, "Be not afraid." Why should we not be afraid? Because of what St. Paul writes in Romans, "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (5:20). In other words, God is not outdone by evil. So, in a time of great evil, God wants to give even greater graces, and in our time, the graces are *huge*, precisely because there's so much sin. How can we tap into the extraordinary graces of our time? If there are tons of graces available to us, how are we to gather them in?

Tapping Into the Graces

Alright, so how do we do it? How do we get the great graces of Divine Mercy in our time? One important way to get them is to live out a

devotion to Divine Mercy, and learning how to live it out is easy. All you need to know is one, little word – actually, it's a little bird: finch. F-I-N-C-H. Finch. If you remember this word, you've got it. So let's get started with **F-I-N-C-H**, beginning with "F."

F = Feast. The Feast of Divine Mercy, also known as Divine Mercy Sunday. Divine Mercy Sunday falls on the Second Sunday of Easter. What's so great about Divine Mercy Sunday? Well, look at it this way: What's the most important feast day of the year? Easter, right? And how many days is Easter? We celebrate it for eight full days, which is why we call it the Octave of Easter. But the last day is the greatest of all. The eighth day. It's the climax of the whole feast. Well, Divine Mercy Sunday is the eighth day of Easter, the climax of the entire Easter celebration. In a sense, it's the most important day of the most important feast! Now, Divine Mercy Sunday existed way before St. Faustina. In fact, it has its roots in the Easter celebrations of the early Church. When Jesus told Faustina that He wanted the feast celebrated, she asked some priests and theologians about it, and they told her, "There already is such a feast." So, Faustina went back to Jesus and told Him, "They tell me that there already is such a feast, and so why should I talk about it?" Jesus responded, "And who knows anything about this feast? No one!" (*Diary of St. Faustina, 347*). In other words, the great feast of mercy had been forgotten and was almost completely unknown... he (Jesus) told her: On that day [Divine Mercy Sunday], the very depths of My tender mercy are opened. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy. On that day, all the divine floodgates through which graces flow are opened. (*Diary of St. Faustina, 699*)

Thousands upon thousands of people attest to the super-power of prayer offered on Divine Mercy Sunday. But we still haven't gotten to our favorite part of Divine Mercy Sunday, what we call "the clean slate grace." Regarding Divine Mercy Sunday, Jesus told St. Faustina, "*The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment*"(699). Now, that's a big deal. It means that if we were to die right after receiving this grace, then we wouldn't have to go to purgatory! In other words, our slate is wiped clean. In fact, the theologian who was assigned by the future Pope John Paul II to investigate the question "What is the grace of Mercy Sunday?" likened the grace to a second baptism. Of course, it's not the same as Baptism, but it is an extraordinary grace of being cleansed of sin and the punishment due to sin. Unfortunately, a lot of people confuse the great grace of Divine Mercy Sunday with a plenary indulgence. It's not the same thing. To get a plenary indulgence, you need to do the indulgenced act, pray for the intentions of the Holy Father, go to confession (within 20 days), receive Holy Communion, and be detached from all sin. That last one is the kicker. Are we detached from all sin? Saint Philip Neri was speaking to a large crowd of people who had gathered for some Church event to receive a plenary indulgence, and the Holy Spirit told St. Philip that only two people in the whole crowd were going to receive the plenary indulgence: Philip himself and a seven-year-old boy – presumably because everyone else was attached to sin. Now, the good news about the grace of Divine Mercy Sunday is that to receive it, you simply need to go to confession before or on the feast – the experts say that sometime during Lent suffices – be in the state of grace (no mortal sin), and receive Holy Communion with the intention of obtaining the promised grace. Of course, we should also do acts of mercy such as forgiving

people, praying for others, and having the intention to be more merciful to our neighbor.

I = Image. What image? The Image of Divine Mercy. Jesus told St. Faustina to have an image painted just as He looked when He appeared to her. She obeyed and had it painted by a Polish artist, Eugene Kazimirowski. It took him more than 12 tries before Faustina accepted it as satisfactory. As you can see from the image right here to the right, Jesus' right hand is raised in blessing. Also, He's taking a step toward us, and two rays of light issue from His Heart: a red ray and a pale ray, representing the blood and water that gushed forth from His pierced side on the Cross. At the bottom of the image, Jesus wanted a prayer to be written, "Jesus, I trust in You." He also promised to give great graces through it. For instance, one time, He said: I am offering people a vessel with which they are to keep coming for graces ... that vessel is this image with the signature, Jesus, I trust in You." By means of this image, I shall be granting many graces to souls. (327, 742) We've received countless testimonies from people who have experienced special graces through the Divine Mercy image. One grace that comes through the image is this: It heals the way people often mistakenly view God. Here's what we mean. People too often have a false image of God. They're afraid of Him and see Him as some mean ogre just out to ruin their fun. Well, the Image of Divine Mercy helps to change that. In it, we discover our Merciful Savior who surely calls us to conversion but who also blesses us, loves us, and is deserving of all of our trust.

Next, we come to the letter "N," as in F-I-N ...

N = Novena. The Novena to Divine Mercy. Jesus taught St. Faustina a novena that He wanted her to pray and that we can all pray. Each day He asked that a different group of people be entrusted to Him (for example, "all sinners" on day one and "all priests and religious" on day two). It can be prayed at any time, but a special time to pray it is in preparation for Divine Mercy Sunday. The starting date for the novena, combined with praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, is Good Friday, and it ends on the Saturday after Easter Sunday, the day before Divine Mercy Sunday.

C = Chaplet. The Chaplet of Divine Mercy. This is a prayer that's prayed on ordinary rosary beads, and it's pretty popular today – perhaps because it can be prayed in a short amount of time (about seven minutes).

I think another reason why the chaplet is so popular is because it's such an incredibly powerful prayer. Why is it so powerful? Because it draws its strength from the holiest and mightiest prayer there is: the Mass. In other words, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy is a kind of extension of the prayer of the Mass. In fact, it's a kind of extension of what we'll call the "supercharged moment of the Mass." Here's what we mean: It's an extension of that moment when the priest at the altar takes the Body and Blood of Christ into his hands and offers it up to the Father with these words:

Through Him, and with Him, and in Him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is Yours forever and ever. Amen. That's supercharged because, at the Mass, Jesus is giving Himself Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity into our hands: literally, in the hands of the priest and spiritually, in the hands of all the lay faithful who are uniting their own sacrifices to the offering of the priest at the altar. Together, each in his own way, we offer Jesus' infinite sacrifice of love to the Father. That's the power of the Mass. It's Jesus' own sacrifice of love in our hands, held up to the Father, and

the Father can't resist such a perfect sacrifice of love. It really is the perfect prayer. Now, the chaplet is an extension of that moment of the Mass, because on the "Our Father" beads of the rosary, we pray, "Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ in atonement for our sins and those of [what? ... my family? ... my city? ... no, not just that ...] for the whole world." So, it's a bold prayer: It's for the whole world! And it can be bold, because it relies on infinite merits: Christ's infinite sacrifice of love on the Cross. Alright, so this explains the "Our Father" beads. On each "Hail Mary" bead, we pray, "For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world." In other words, as we're holding up to the Father His Son's infinite sacrifice of love, we keep repeating: "Mercy, mercy, mercy." More specifically, we keep praying, "Have mercy on us and on the whole world." And this is powerful. And you know who it's most powerful for? The dying. Our Heavenly Father said to St. Faustina: When this chaplet is said by the bedside of a dying person ... unfathomable mercy envelops the soul, and the very depths of My tender mercy are moved for the sake of the sorrowful Passion of My Son. (811) Also, Jesus made several comforting promises to those who pray the chaplet: Say unceasingly the chaplet that I have taught you. Whoever will recite it will receive great mercy at the hour of death. ... Even if there were a sinner most hardened, if he were to recite this chaplet only once, he would receive grace from My infinite mercy. (687) The souls that say this chaplet will be embraced by My mercy during their lifetime and especially at the hour of their death. (754) Oh, what great graces I will grant to souls who say this chaplet; the very depths of My tender mercy are stirred for the sake of those who say the chaplet. (848) My daughter, encourage souls to say the chaplet which I have given to you.

It pleases Me to grant everything they ask of Me by saying the chaplet. When hardened sinners say it, I will fill their souls with peace, and the hour of their death will be a happy one. (1541)

Now, on to the last letter: "H," as in F-I-N-C-H.

H = Hour. What hour? The Hour of Great Mercy. Because Jesus died on the Cross for us at 3 p.m., every day between 3-4 in the afternoon is known as the Hour of Great Mercy. During this hour, Jesus asked St. Faustina to pray the Stations of the Cross, provided her duties permitted it. But He went on to say: If you are not able to make the Stations of the Cross, then at least step into the chapel for a moment and adore, in the Blessed Sacrament, My Heart, which is full of mercy; and should you be unable to step into the chapel, immerse yourself in prayer there where you happen to be ... and if only for a brief moment, immerse yourself in My Passion, particularly in My abandonment at the moment of agony. (1572, 1320) What Jesus wants above all, through this devotion, is that we have mercy on Him! In other words, He wants us to recall His sacrifice of love. He wants us to think about what He did for us on the Cross. He simply wants our love. So, let's get "the three o'clock habit" and remember Jesus' sacrifice of love for us, even if only for a moment. Oh, and one other thing about the Three O'clock Hour: Jesus promised that it's a huge time of grace: "This is the hour of great mercy for the whole world. ... I will refuse nothing to the soul that makes a request of Me in virtue of My Passion" (1320). Thus, we can look at this hour as a kind of mini-Mercy Sunday that we have every day. So, it's also a great time to pray for our loved ones, especially for the conversion of unrepentant sinners, and to recite the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.



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