

Celebrating Divine Mercy Sunday at Home

Our annual celebration of the Second Sunday of Easter, of Divine Mercy Sunday, was always focused around the Eucharist, and rightly so, because this is what Jesus wanted when He spoke about this feast to St. Faustina. Also, for many, many people Divine Mercy Sunday was a day of profound encounter with the merciful God in the sacrament of reconciliation. No one could foresee that a time would come when neither of these sacraments would be available for most of the Catholics in the world.

Still, every challenging situation is also an opportunity. We encourage you to use this unique situation for a special time of prayer with your family or friends with whom you live during lockdown. If you live alone you can invite your loved ones to this special time of prayer through online connection.

This unique celebration has a twofold goal. The first is to express and increase trust toward our merciful God. Trust is what He desires the most and what we need most. On one of many occasions when speaking about trust Jesus said to St. Faustina: *Encourage the souls with whom you come in contact to trust in My infinite Mercy. Oh, how I love those souls who have complete confidence in Me. I will do everything for them.* (Diary, 294) The second goal is that we might deepen our relationships, that we might get to know one another on a deeper level while honestly sharing our faith.

Below you can find some suggestions for your Divine Mercy Sunday family celebration. Feel free either to use of these, or to be creative with an idea of your own.

1. Take the Divine Mercy Image and place it in a central place where you will gather. If you don't have this image, take any image that speaks to you most about God's mercy. You can also use your computer screen to display the image. Here is a link where you can see the miraculous Image of Divine Mercy from the Shrine in Cracow, Poland:

<https://www.faustyna.pl/zmbm/en/miraculous-image-of-merciful-jesus/>

Decorate the Image with flowers or candles or whatever you feel would be appropriate to express your love and veneration of God in the mystery of His merciful love.

2. Start the prayer by making a Sign of the Cross. Pray to the Holy Spirit that He would guide you through this special time. For example: *Come Holy Spirit, fill our house with Your presence, open our hearts and minds to Your guidance. Take away all our fears, heal our wounds with Your balm of forgiveness. Help us to meet in Your love and compassion. Help us to see God's mercy in our lives. Fill us with gratitude and teach us to worship.*
3. Read 1 passage from the Bible illustrating God's merciful love:

Eph 2:4-10 God, who is rich in mercy, brought us to life in Christ

Rom 5:6-11 Christ died for us while we were still sinners

Lk 15:3-7 The Parable of the Lost Sheep

Lk 15:1-3, 11-32 The Parable of the Prodigal Son

Jn 20:19-31 The Appearances of the Risen Christ to his Apostles

4. Read 1 or 2 passages either from
 - a. St. Faustina's *Diary*, e.g. **699, 206, 420, 1498, 1541**. If you don't have the Diary you can find it online: <https://www.faustyna.pl/zmbm/en/diary-full-text/>
 - b. St. John Paul II encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*, e.g. **7, 8, 15**. You can find it online: http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30111980_dives-in-misericordia.html

5. */REGARDING YOUR PAST/* Start a spontaneous prayer giving thanks to God for His mercy, recalling all the things He had done in your personal life. Praise Him for His goodness demonstrated in a very concrete way. May the memory of His loving care and power revealed in your past strengthen your faith and hope as you think about the future.

Allow every member of this prayerful gathering to speak up whenever they are ready. Some may also choose to stay silent and participate only by listening. Respect that.

You may conclude this part of the prayer with one of these **Psalms: 136, 138, 34, 66 or 100**.

6. */REGARDING YOUR PRESENT/* Give thanks to God for your present situation. Name those things that you feel are really good and for which you want to express your gratitude to God. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to see the present time with God's eyes. Feel especially invited to give thanks to God for situations which are challenging, difficult, but deep inside you feel that there is a hidden treasure in them which with time will be revealed.

You may conclude this part of the prayer with one of these **Psalms: 91, 23, 121, 130, 146 or with Isaiah 43:1-5**.

7. */REGARDING YOUR FUTURE/* Jesus said to St. Faustina that Divine Mercy Sunday is a special day when He wants to lavish His graces generously upon all who will approach Him. He said: ***On that day are open all the divine floodgates through which graces flow. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me (...)*** (Diary, 699) Encouraged by these words turn to the merciful God with trust in a spontaneous prayer handing over to Him your intentions.

This can be also the moment when you will ask God for the greatest grace of this day. Jesus said that on Divine Mercy Sunday ***the soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment*** (Diary, 699). During pandemic, when the sacraments are not accessible for most of the Catholics, we are encouraged to do an act of contrition (in place of confession) and an act of spiritual communion (in place of receiving the sacramental Communion).

Open your heart to receive the abundance of God's graces that He wants to give you especially today through the attitude of trust in Him and mercy toward your neighbors. For God everything is possible!

8. Conclude your time of prayer with **the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy** and a **joyful song** to praise the goodness of our God.