

Divine Mercy Sunday is a recent addition to the Church's calendar, and it has links to both private revelation and the Bible.

Millions of people look forward to and are profoundly moved by this day.

What is it, and why is it so important to them?

Here are 9 things you need to know.

### *1. What is Divine Mercy Sunday?*

Divine Mercy Sunday is celebrated on the Second Sunday of Easter. It is based on the private revelations to St. Faustina Kowalska, which recommended a devotion to the Divine Mercy.

It also has links to the Bible and the readings of this day.

To learn more about St. Faustina, you can [CLICK HERE](#).

### *2. When was it made part of the Church's calendar?*

In 2000, Pope John Paul II canonized St. Faustina and, during the ceremony, he declared:

”It is important then that we accept the whole message that comes to us from the word of God on this Second Sunday of Easter, which from now on throughout the Church *will be called ‘Divine Mercy Sunday.’*”

“In the various readings, the liturgy seems to indicate the path of mercy which, while re-establishing the relationship of each person with God, also creates new relations of fraternal solidarity among human beings”.

### *3. If this is based on private revelation, why is it on the Church's calendar?*

In his theological commentary in The Message of Fatima, then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger wrote: “We might add that private revelations often spring from popular piety and leave their stamp on it, giving it a new impulse and opening the way for new forms of it. Nor does this exclude that they will have an effect even on the liturgy, as we see for instance in the feasts of Corpus Christi and of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. From one point of view, the relationship between Revelation and private revelations appears in the relationship between the liturgy and popular piety: The liturgy is the criterion; it is the living form of the Church as a whole, fed directly by the Gospel. Popular piety is a sign that the Faith is spreading its roots into the heart of a people in such a way that it reaches into daily life. Popular religiosity is the first and fundamental mode of “inculturation” of the Faith. While it must always take its lead and direction from the liturgy, it in turn enriches the Faith by involving the heart.

#### *4. What does the Church do to encourage the celebration of devotion to the Divine Mercy on this day?*

Among other things, it offers a plenary indulgence:

To ensure that the faithful would observe this day with intense devotion, the Supreme Pontiff [Pope St. John Paul II] himself established that this Sunday be enriched by a plenary indulgence, as will be explained below, so that the faithful might receive in great abundance the gift of the consolation of the Holy Spirit.

In this way, they can foster a growing love for God and for their neighbor, and after they have obtained God's pardon, they in turn might be persuaded to show a prompt pardon to their brothers and sisters. . . .

a plenary indulgence, granted under the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer for the intentions of Supreme Pontiff) to the faithful who, on the Second Sunday of Easter or Divine Mercy Sunday, in any Church or Chapel, in a spirit that is completely detached from the affection for a sin, even a venial sin, take part in the prayers and devotions held in honor of Divine Mercy, or who, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed or reserved in the tabernacle, recite the Our Father and the Creed, adding a devout prayer to the merciful Lord Jesus (e.g. Merciful Jesus, I trust in you!").

((For more information about the plenary indulgence, [CLICK HERE](https://www.ncregister.com/blog/joseph-pronechen/how-to-get-a-plenary-indulgence-on-divine-mercy-sunday).(  
<https://www.ncregister.com/blog/joseph-pronechen/how-to-get-a-plenary-indulgence-on-divine-mercy-sunday>)

#### *5. What is the Divine Mercy image?*

The Divine Mercy image is a depiction of Jesus based on a vision that St. Faustina had in 1931. There have been a number of paintings made of this image. The original, though not the most popular one today, is shown above.

A basic explanation of the image is: Jesus is shown in most versions as raising his right hand in blessing and pointing with his left hand on his chest from which flow forth two rays: one red and one white (translucent). The depictions often contain the message "Jesus, I trust in You!" (Polish: *Jezu ufam Tobie*). The rays streaming out have symbolic meaning: red for the blood of Jesus (which is the Life of Souls), and pale for the water (which justify souls) (from Diary - 299). The whole image is symbolic of charity, forgiveness and love of God, referred to as the "Fountain of Mercy." According to the diary of St Faustina, the image is based on her 1931 vision of Jesus [[source](#)].

#### *6. What is the Chaplet of Divine Mercy?*

The Chaplet of Divine Mercy is a set of prayers used as part of the Divine Mercy devotion. They are usually said using a standard set of Rosary beads, often at 3 p.m. (the time of Jesus' death), but with a different set of prayers than those used in the Marian Rosary.

*7. How is the Divine Mercy devotion linked to the Scripture readings for the Second Sunday of Easter?*

The Divine Mercy image depicts Jesus at the moment he appears to the disciples in the Upper Room, after the Resurrection, when he empowers them to forgive or retain sins. This moment is recorded in John 20:19-31, which is the Gospel reading for this Sunday in all three yearly Sunday liturgical cycles (A, B, and C). This reading is placed on this day because it includes the appearance of Jesus to the Apostle Thomas (in which Jesus invites him to touch his wounds). This event occurred on the eighth day after the Resurrection (John 20:26), and so it is used on the liturgy eight days after Easter. (It also, however, includes the appearance of Jesus to the disciples on Easter evening, a week earlier, in which he empowered them to forgive or retain sins.)

*8. How did Jesus empower the apostles to forgive or retain sins?*

That part of the text reads: [21] Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you."

[22] And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

[23] If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

He thus gave them a special empowerment with the Holy Spirit to forgive or retain sins.

*9. How does this relate to the sacrament of confession?*

It relates directly to it. Jesus empowered the apostles (and their successors in ministry) with the Holy Spirit to *either* forgive *or* retain (not forgive) sins. Because they are empowered with God's Spirit to do this, their administration of forgiveness is efficacious-it really removes sin rather than just being a symbol of forgiveness a person is thought to have obtained already. Because they are instructed to forgive *or* retain, they must discern which they are to do. This means that they need to know about the sin and whether we are truly repentant of it. As a result, we must tell them about the sin and our sorrow for it. Hence: confession. And the Church Fathers understood Christ's ministers as having this power.