

JOURNEY TO OUR FATHER

FULFILLING HIS DIVINE WILL ON THE PATH TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

Discerning and Living the Authentic Faith and Moral Teachings of the Catholic Church in Our Modern World

PRAISING THE DIVINE MERCY CHAPLET FOR THE SICK AND DYING

By Dr. Bryan Thatcher

The Divine Mercy Chaplet originated from a vision that St. Faustina had of an Angel, the executor of divine wrath, on the evening of September 13, 1935. She wrote: "He was clothed in a dazzling robe, his face gloriously bright, a cloud beneath his feet. From the cloud, bolts of thunder and flashes of lightning were springing into his hands; and from his hand they were going forth, and only then were they striking the earth. When I saw this sign of divine wrath which was about to strike the earth, and in particular a certain place, which for good reasons I cannot name, I began to implore the angel to hold off for a few moments, and the world would do penance. But my plea was a mere nothing in the face of the divine anger. Just then I saw the Most Holy Trinity. The greatness of Its majesty pierced me deeply, and I did not dare to repeat my entreaties. At that very moment I felt in my soul the power of Jesus' grace, which dwells in my soul. When I became conscious of this grace, I was instantly snatched up before the Throne of God. Oh, how great is our Lord and God and how incomprehensible His holiness! I will make no attempt to describe this greatness, because before long we shall all see Him as He is. I found myself pleading with God for the world with words heard interiorly.

As I was praying in this manner, I saw the Angel's helplessness: he could not carry out the just punishment which was rightly due for sins. Never before had I prayed with such inner power as I did then. The words with which I entreated God are these: **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 the whole world; for the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us.**

The next morning, when I entered chapel, I heard these words interiorly: **"Every time you enter the chapel, immediately recite the prayer which I taught you yesterday."** When I had said the prayer, in my soul I heard these words: **"This prayer will serve to appease My wrath. You will recite it for nine days, on the beads of the rosary, in the following manner: First of all, you will say one OUR FATHER and HAIL MARY and the I BELIEVE IN GOD. Then, on the OUR**

FATHER beads you will say the following words: 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 the whole world. On the HAIL MARY beads you will say the following words: For the sake of His sorrowful Passion have mercy on us and on the whole world. In conclusion, three times you will recite these words: Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world ' " (Diary, 474-476).

One of the best means of assisting the dying is the one that Jesus revealed to Saint Faustina and insisted that she use often -- even continuously: The Divine Mercy Chaplet. Jesus said: **"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. ... Write that when they say this chaplet in the presence of the dying, I will stand between My Father and the dying person, not as the just Judge but as the merciful Savior** (Diary, 1541).

GOD AND SOULS was the motto of St. Faustina. Our goal, as was hers, should be in saving souls. Our Lord asked her to pray and offer the Chaplet for sinners and the dying, saying: **"Pray as much as you can for the dying. By your entreaties [that is, insistent prayers] obtain for them trust in My mercy, because they have most need of trust, and have it the least. Be assured that the grace of eternal salvation for certain souls in their final moment depends on your prayer. You know the whole abyss of My mercy, so draw upon it for yourself and especially for poor sinners. Sooner would heaven and earth turn into nothingness than would My mercy not embrace a trusting soul"** (Diary, 1777).

Saint Faustina was often given the grace to know when a certain dying person desired or needed prayer; she would be alerted to the moment, by her Guardian Angel or by Our Lord Himself. At those times she would pray until she no longer felt the need to pray, or a sense of peace came upon her, or she learned that the person had died, or heard the soul say, "Thank You!" She wrote: "Oh! Dying souls are in such great need of prayer! O Jesus, inspire souls to pray often for the dying" (Diary, 1015).

Our Lord also said to her, **“At the hour of their death, I defend as My own glory every soul that will say this chaplet; or when others say it for a dying person, the pardon is the same”** (Diary, 811).

What if the person prays from a distance? Saint Faustina had a love for the sick and dying, and prayed for them with great fervor. The following experiences recorded in her Diary make it clear that one does not have to be at the bedside physically. She wrote, “It sometimes happens that the dying person is in the second or third building away, yet for the spirit, space does not exist. It sometimes happens that I know about a death occurring several hundred kilometers away. This has happened several times with regard to my family and relatives and also sisters in religion, and even souls whom I have not known during their lifetime” (Diary, 835).

“My daughter, help Me to save a certain dying sinner. Say the chaplet that I have taught you for him.” When I began to say the chaplet, I saw the man dying in the midst of terrible torment and struggle. His Guardian Angel was defending him, but he was, as it were, powerless against the enormity of the soul’s misery. A multitude of devils was waiting for the soul. But while I was saying the chaplet, I saw Jesus just as He is depicted in the image. The rays which issued from Jesus’ Heart enveloped the sick man, and the powers of darkness fled in panic. The sick man peacefully breathed his last. When I came to myself, I understood how very important the chaplet was for the dying. It appeases the anger of God” (Diary, 1565).

These words are particularly relevant for all Eucharistic adorers. In chapels throughout the world they are reciting or praying the Chaplet for the sick and dying, and are part of an International Registry established by Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy. Moreover, on the occasion of the Great Jubilee of the year 2000, the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, by a personally signed parchment, imparted a Special Apostolic Blessing “to all the faithful, who during Adoration of Our Most Merciful Savior in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar will be praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet for the sick and for those throughout the world who will be dying in that hour.”

The Divine Mercy Chaplet and Eucharistic Adoration

Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy have for their declared mission the foremost purpose of proclaiming the truth of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist: Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, as solemnly defined by the Council of Trent, and of promoting Perpetual Adoration of the Most

Blessed Sacrament along with the hourly offering of The Divine Mercy Chaplet for the dying, insofar as it is possible for them to do so.

Their secondary purpose is to bring to a hurting world the consoling Divine Mercy Message and Devotion, revealed to the Church through Saint Faustina Kowalska in Poland in the 1930’s. One of the principal elements of The Divine Mercy Devotion is the Divine Mercy Chaplet. A form of prayer taught to St. Faustina by Our Lord Himself, the Chaplet is significant because it brings together the sacrifice of the Lord’s Passion and of the Most Holy Eucharist. This accounts for the powerful effects attributed to its use, as promised by the Savior through St. Faustina, the “Apostle” and “Secretary” of His mercy.

The principal prayer of the Chaplet alludes to the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar: “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 the whole world.” The accompanying prayer declares, “For the sake of [that is, out of regard for] His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world,” which alludes to the Holy Sacrifice of the Cross. The two most significant moments of our Lord’s mission on earth, nonetheless, are in reality two parts of a single act – Christ’s sacrifice of Himself on our behalf. The one part constitutes the essence of the sacrifice, and that took place at the Last Supper during the institution of the Eucharist, when with His own hands Jesus offered His Body and His Blood; the other part constitutes the external ceremony, when Jesus was nailed to a cross and died upon it (see Diary, 684).

The Opening Prayer of the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, which is also the prayer most commonly used just before the celebrant blesses people with the Blessed Sacrament at the close of Benediction Services, clearly declares that the Eucharist is the memorial of Christ’s suffering and death. For Christians, the word “memorial” does not mean an action of our mind, a mere “calling to mind,” or “remembering,” but, in the case of Christ’s sacrificial suffering and death, it means the making present and experiencing, here and now, of the spiritual effects of that sacrifice upon us (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1366). The Last Supper and Calvary are made present to us at one and the same time whenever we participate in Holy Mass or Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

To be more precise, however, what actually happens at the Mass is that the participants are taken out of the dimension of earthly space and time, as we experience it, and are brought into the dimension of time from God’s perspective. Theologians call this divine perspective, God’s “eternal now.” Simply put, it means

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that God sees and acts through everything that ever happened, is happening, or will be happening, in one and the same instant. In other words, all times and places are present before Him at once. Christ's one Sacrifice, at the Last Supper and on the Cross, is therefore eternally present before God, and its effects can be applied by Him to any point of time in history – past, present, or future. Now, with regard to what has just been stated, what is the significance of the Divine Mercy Chaplet?

The Letter to the Hebrews (see 7:27 and 9:14) assures us that the salvation of humankind was accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth when, through the eternal Spirit, He offered Himself without blemish to God in our place and for us. Through the eternal Spirit, therefore, Christ's sacrifice was taken out of space and time into the eternal now, from where it affects every point of history, past, present and future.

As Jesus entered the heavenly Holy of Holies with the offering of His own Blood (life), He was "made perfect." In other words, He was constituted the Great High Priest over God's Holy Temple, and we, who believe in and obey Him, have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (see Heb 10:10). The result is that He has made perfect forever – that is, constituted as priests – those who are being made holy (see Heb 10:14). As such, in and with Christ our Great High Priest, we are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (see 1 Pet 2:5). These spiritual sacrifices are sacrifices of praise, the fruit of lips that confess Jesus' name (see Heb 13:15).

All are called to spread the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and the mercy of God! As Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy, then, we need to be keenly aware of what all this means when we pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet. In the first place, our prayer becomes a spiritual sacrifice, the fruit of lips that acknowledge Jesus' name and all it stands for. As we pray: "For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world," we are not begging God to grant something He might be holding back from us, but offering a sacrifice of praise, we are acknowledging, affirming, acclaiming Him as the Merciful One who has in Christ, once-for-all, granted us all that we need to fulfill His purposes for us. We trust in His merciful providence concerning every instant and every facet of our lives.

All the more, then, it is evident, that as we pray the principal prayer of the Chaplet: "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 the whole world," we stand with and in our Great High Priest at the Father's heavenly throne and altar in the eternal "now," and with Jesus we

are able to direct the saving effects of His atoning sacrifice to anyone or any situation in the past, present or future!

As we pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet for ourselves or for others, since all the above and more are consonant with the will of God for us, we can be most powerfully instrumental in calling down these blessings on every person and situation or need. Our Lord promised through St. Faustina: **"Through the Chaplet you will obtain everything, if what you ask for is compatible with my will"** (Diary, 1731).

This will be all the more true as Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy offer up the Chaplet hourly for the dying, especially during the Hour of Great Mercy, and during periods of Eucharistic Adoration. Our Lord urged St. Faustina to do so on numerous occasions. There are at least 35 entries in her Diary dealing with prayers for the dying, many of them encouraging the use of the Chaplet for that purpose. For example:

- **"At the hour of their death, I defend as My own glory every soul that will say this chaplet; or when others say it for a dying person, the indulgence is the same. When this chaplet is said by the bedside of a dying person, God's anger is placated, 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"** (Diary, 811).

- **"Say unceasingly the chaplet that I have taught you. Whoever will recite it will receive great mercy at the hour of death. Priests will recommend it to sinners as their last hope of salvation. 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"** (Diary, 687)

- **"My daughter, encourage souls to say the chaplet that 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"** (Diary, 1541).

- **"My daughter, help Me to save souls. You will go to a dying sinner, and you will continue to recite the chaplet, and in this way you will obtain for him trust in My mercy, for he is already in despair"** (Diary, 1797).

The Divine Mercy Chaplet is a Eucharistic Prayer

In reciting the Divine Mercy Chaplet, we join Jesus in offering Himself to the Father, in atonement for our sins, in imploring mercy for the whole world. As the Church teaches that Jesus is present Body, Blood, Soul

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and Divinity in the Blessed Sacrament, we are offering to the Father His only Son, a gift He cannot refuse. We unite with the sacrifice of Jesus offered up on the cross for the salvation of the world. The prayer embodies the Eucharist, the Cross, and the love that the Merciful Father and His Son have for each of us. Our Lord wants us to visit and adore Him in the most Blessed Sacrament. St. Faustina wrote: "When I steeped myself in prayer, I was transported in spirit to the chapel, where I saw the Lord Jesus, exposed in the monstrance. In place of the monstrance I saw the glorious face of the Lord, and He said to me, **'What you see in reality these souls see through faith. Oh, how pleasing to me is their great faith! You see, although there appears to be no trace of life in me, in reality it is present in its fullness in each and every Host. But for Me to be able to act upon a soul, the soul must have faith. Oh how pleasing to me is living faith!'**" (Diary, 1420).

And in entry 1572, she wrote that the Lord told her, **"My daughter, try your best to make the Stations of the Cross in this hour, provided that your duties permit it; and 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..."**

In the Holy Father's letter to the Bishop of Liege, Belgium of May 28, 1996, Pope John Paul II wrote, "I encourage Christians regularly to visit Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament, for we are all called to abide in the presence of God. In contemplation, Christians will perceive ever more profoundly in the mystery at the heart of Christian life."

We greatly encourage praying of the Divine Mercy Chaplet hourly worldwide for the sick and dying, especially during Eucharistic Adoration, in the presence of Our Merciful Lord. As mentioned before, an Apostolic Blessing has been given by His Holiness, John Paul II to those who pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet for the sick and dying during Eucharistic adoration. We ask all those who are adoring Him in the Blessed Sacrament, in praying the Chaplet and imploring mercy for the dying, to truly trust in God's Mercy, so that many souls will be saved. The promise is that Jesus will grant immeasurable mercy at the hour of death, to every soul praying the Chaplet and every soul prayed for. Thus, we must trust in His unfathomable Mercy in what He said to St. Faustina, **"My Daughter, ...Your duty will be to trust completely in My goodness, and My duty will be to give to you all you need. I am making Myself dependent upon your trust: if your trust is great, then My generosity will be without limit"** (Diary, 548).

As we pray the Chaplet of Mercy with an attitude of trust in the presence of Our Lord during adoration, we can be assured that we will be a vessel of Mercy, as we reflect on these words: "Once, the image was being exhibited over the altar during the Corpus Christi procession. When the priest exposed the Blessed Sacrament, and the choir began to sing, the rays from the image pierced the Sacred Host and spread out all over the world. Then I heard these words: **'these rays of mercy will pass through you just as they have passed through this Host, and they will go out through all the world.'** At these words, profound joy entered my soul (Diary, 441)."

Dr. Bryan Thatcher is the Director of the Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy. If you have any questions regarding praying for the sick and dying during Eucharistic Adoration, or would like more information on other aspects of the ministry of Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy, call them toll-free at 877-380-0727, visit their website at www.thedivinemercy.org, or write to them at 123 North Kings Avenue, Brandon, FL 33510.

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Our lives here on earth can be described as a constant journey to the home of the Father. The love of our Heavenly Father is ever reaching out for His wayward children and the greatest sign of His love was shown 2000 years ago when He sent His son, Jesus, to show us the way back to the Father.

We show our love for Jesus by doing His will. We do His will by following and living by all the authentic faith and moral teachings of the Catholic Church. Drawing people back to the authentic truth about the Catholic faith helps us to be reconciled with our God, and obtain peace, holiness and happiness in this sinful world; and eternal salvation with our loving God in the next world.

"Journey to Our Father" is helping to bring people back to the authentic teachings of the Catholic Church, and to develop a closer more loving and holy relationship with their God.

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