



SPECIAL EDITION

# MERCY in ACTION

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## St. Faustina Kowalska, Apostle of the Divine Mercy



August 25, 1905- October 5, 1938

Saint Sister Faustina Kowalska, the world-renowned apostle of Divine Mercy and one of the greatest mystics of the Church, was born on August 25, 1905 in Głogowiec (Łódź region). She was the third of ten children, in a poor Catholic peasant family. At her baptism, in the nearby parish church of Świnice Warckie, she was given the name Helena. During her childhood she distinguished herself by acts of devotion, her love for prayer, hard work, obedience and a tremendous sensitivity to human misery.

Despite completing only three years of schooling, in her Diary she clearly described what she wanted to achieve, in a simple, precise manner, without any ambiguity.

In the Diary she wrote about her experiences from her childhood:

“From the age of seven, I experienced the definite call of God, the grace of a vocation to the religious life. It was in the seventh year of my life that, for the first time, I heard God’s voice in my soul; that is, an invitation to a more perfect life. But I was not always obedient to the call to grace. I came across no one who would have explained these things to me.”

At the age of sixteen she left her family home for the nearby city of Aleksandrów and then moved to Łódź, where she worked as a servant to support herself and to help her parents. During this period the desire to join a convent was gradually growing inside her. Since her parents were against it, young Helena tried to deaden God’s call.

Years later, she reminisced about this in her Diary:

“Once I was at a dance with one of my sisters and while everybody was having a good time, my soul was experiencing internal torments. As I began to dance, I suddenly saw Jesus at my side, Jesus racked with pain, stripped of his clothing, covered with wounds, who spoke these words to me, *“How long shall I suffer and how long will you keep deceiving Me?”* (Diary, 9) At that moment the charming music stopped and any company vanished from my sight; there remained Jesus and I. I took a seat by my dear sister, pretending to have a headache to hide what had taken place in my soul. After a while, I slipped out unnoticed, leaving my sister and all my companions behind, and made my way to the Cathedral of Saint Stanislaus Kostka (Łódź).

It was almost twilight; there were only a few people in the cathedral. Paying no attention to what was happening around me, I fell prostrate before the Blessed Sacrament and begged the Lord to be good enough to allow me to understand what I should do next. Then I heard these words, *“Go at once to Warsaw (Poland), you will enter a convent there”*. I rose from prayer, came home and took care of things that needed to be settled. As best I could, I confided to my sister what took



Wenecki Park in Łódź – the dance site



St. Stanislaus Kostka Cathedral Church in Łódź



*place within my soul. I told her to say goodbye to our parents and thus, in one dress, with no other belongings, I arrived in Warsaw” (Diary, 9-10).*

In her Diary she described her feelings when joining the convent:

“It seemed to me that I had stepped into the life of Paradise. A single prayer was bursting forth from my heart, one of thanksgiving” (Diary, 17).

In Warsaw, she knocked on numerous convents’ doors, but with no luck. Finally, on August 1, 1925, she applied to the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, located

at Żytnia Street in Warsaw, and she was

accepted. Before that though, to satisfy the conditions and put together her outfit, she worked as a housekeeper near Warsaw for a family with several children.

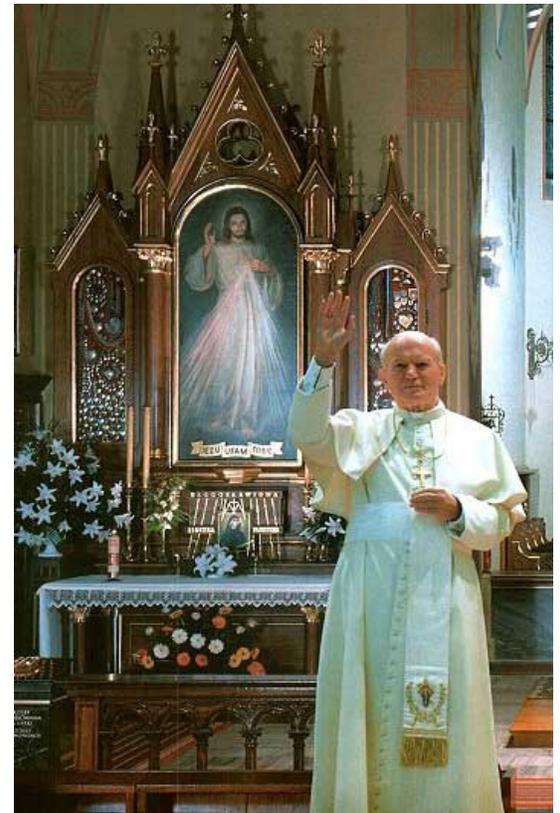
Upon joining the Congregation, Helena took on the name Sister Mary Faustina. She completed her probation in Cracow where, in the presence of Bishop Stanislaus Rospond, she took her initial religious vows, and five years later, perpetual vows professing chastity, poverty and obedience. She was assigned to work in various houses of the Congregation, spending the longest periods of time in Cracow, Płock and Vilnius, working as a cook, gardener and doorkeeper. Her extraordinarily rich mystical life was not visible to others in the convents or outside. She passionately fulfilled her duties and faithfully observed all the monastic rules. She was focused and silent, but at the same time, natural and cheerful full of a kind and unselfish love for her neighbors. Her rigorous lifestyle and exhausting fasting, which she was undertaking even before joining the Congregation, weakened her body to such an extent that already during her postulanship it became necessary to send her for medical treatment.

After her first year in novitiate, she went through an unusually painful mystic experience: her so-called “dark night”, and then, further spiritual and moral sufferings related to fulfilling the mission she was given by Lord Jesus. Sister Faustina sacrificed her life for sinners to save their souls; for that she underwent a diverse range of sufferings.

During the final years of her life, her health deteriorated significantly: she developed tuberculosis which attacked her lungs and gastrointestinal tract. As a result, she underwent two periods of hospital treatment, each lasting a few months.

Physically totally ravaged, but spiritually entirely mature being mystically united with God, she died in Cracow-Łagiewniki on October 5, 1938 in the odour of sanctity, having lived for only 33 years, including 13 years of monastic life.

On April 30, 2000, St. John Paul II canonized the apostle of Divine Mercy - St. Faustina Kowalska. The canonization ceremony took place at the Vatican, on the second Sunday of Easter, the Sunday that was instituted by the Pope as the Feast of Divine Mercy for the entire church.



# The Mission of St. Faustina

The mission of Saint Faustina consisted of three tasks:

First, proclaiming and bringing the world closer to the truth of the merciful love of God for every human being, as revealed in the Sacred Scriptures.

Second, imploring God's mercy for the entire world, and particularly for sinners, through the practice of the new forms of devotion to The Divine Mercy asked for by the Lord Jesus.

Third, initiating the apostolic movement of Divine Mercy whose devotees and apostles shall bring about a religious renewal among the faithful in the spirit of this devotion, namely, acquiring an attitude of childlike trust in God and actively living the commandment of love and mercy toward one's neighbor.



The house of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Plock, where Lord Jesus ordered Sister Faustina to paint the image of Him.

In her Diary, Faustina writes: "I saw the Lord Jesus clothed in a white garment. (...) After a while, Jesus said to me; 'Paint an image according to the model you see, with the motto below: *Jesus I trust in You. I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel, and then throughout the world*' (Diary, 47).



The original image was hidden away and the devotion banned in 1959 because incorrect grammar changed the meaning of certain phrases in the translated text of the Diary of St Faustina. This is the devotion for our time.



St. Faustina receives a vision of Jesus

In obedience to her spiritual director, she wrote a diary of about 600 pages in which she gives account of the revelations she received on the Mercy of God. The devotions and methods proposed are as follows:

1. *Veneration of the Image of the Divine Mercy*
2. *The Chaplet of Divine Mercy*
3. *The Great Hour of Mercy, 3:00 pm*
4. *The Feast of the Divine Mercy, Sunday after Easter*
5. *Nine Day Novena to the Divine Mercy, starting Good Friday*
6. *The propagation of the message of and devotion to the Divine Mercy*

St Faustina's name is forever linked to the annual feast of the Divine Mercy, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, and the Divine Mercy prayer recited each day at 3pm.

Credit to The Congregation of the Sisters of Merciful Jesus



## Prayer for the Intercession of Saint Faustina

Saint Faustina, you told us that your mission would continue after your death and that you would not forget us (Diary, 281, 1582).

Our Lord also granted you a great privilege, telling you to “distribute graces as you will, to whom you will, and when you will” (Diary, 31).

Relying on this, I ask your intercession for the graces I need, especially

*(Here mention your special intentions)*

Help me, above all, to trust in Jesus as you did and thus to glorify His mercy every moment of my life. Amen

*Saint Faustina, Pray for us!*

### Donation Form

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### DMHFSC MISSION STATEMENT

-Dedicated to the development of a Divine Mercy Shrine located in Southern California

-Spreading to a fallen world the Divine Mercy message and devotion

-Drawing people of all nations, cultures, and beliefs to a place of meditation in prayer for graces to the fountain of mercy-the image of the Divine Mercy.

-Venerating this image with trust in our Lord Jesus Christ who said, “I promise that the soul who will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over its enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I myself will defend it as, My own glory...By means of this image I shall grant many graces to souls.

-Through this shrine to proclaim to the whole world God’s unfathomable Mercy.

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