



HOW TO OBSERVE THE YEAR OF DIVINE MERCY TO REAP THE SPIRITUAL BENEFITS (2)

By

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Living the Message of Mercy

To obtain God's mercy, the following conditions must be fulfilled: First, there must be **repentance and conversion of heart**. The greatest sin imaginable is not too great to be forgiven, if the sinner is truly repentant. "I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ez. 33:11). Even the worst of sinners God gives sufficient grace to repent and amend their ways. "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as wool" (Is. 1:18). While hardened sinners are never excluded from the grace of conversion, they can and at times do, resist God's invitations and inspirations, clinging to their own will and ideas.

The second requirement is to **be merciful to others**. God wants us to receive His mercy and let it flow through us to others. He wants us to extend love and forgiveness to others just as He does to us. While both the Old and New Testament reveal the limitless dimensions of God's mercy, the New Testament goes beyond the old in its emphasis on mercy as a divine characteristic which men must share. If they are to be the recipient of mercy, they must practice mercy.

The devotional practices revealed through St Faustina were given to us as "vessels of mercy" through which God's love can be poured out upon the world, but they are not sufficient unto themselves. It's not enough for us to hang The Divine Mercy Image in our homes, pray the Chaplet every day at three o'clock, and receive Holy Communion on the first Sunday after Easter. We also have to show mercy to our neighbours through the practice of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy summarized by the Church as **The Seven Corporal Works of Mercy** which are: to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to harbour the harbourless, to visit the sick, to visit the imprisoned and to bury the dead and **The Seven Spiritual Works of Mercy** which are to admonish the sinner, to instruct the ignorant, to counsel the doubtful, to comfort the afflicted, to bear wrongs patiently, to forgive offences and to pray for the living and the dead.

Our Blessed Lord, after explaining various ways in which merciful love responds to offenses and enemies, declares how we must be merciful to our fellow humans if we expect to receive divine mercy:

"Do not judge, and you shall not be judged; do not condemn, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive and you shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they pour into your lap. For the measure you measure with will be measured back to you" (Lk. 6:37, 38).

Our Saviour laid down the same condition for mercy in the prayer He taught us: “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us” (Mt. 6:12). Those few words which we repeat often can bring us a more lenient or a more severe judgment according as we are willing or not willing to forgive others. “Judgment is without mercy to him who has not shown mercy” (Jas. 2:13). So it is not God who puts limits on His mercy, but rather we ourselves.

The third condition for receiving divine mercy is to **completely trust in Jesus**.

Trust in Jesus is the essence of the message of mercy. In repeated revelations to St. Faustina, Our Divine Saviour makes it clear that the fountain is His Heart, the water is His mercy, and the vessel is trust.

How strongly Our Lord speaks about this to St. Faustina!

I demand from you deeds of mercy which are to arise out of love for me. You are to show mercy to your neighbours always and everywhere. You must not shrink from this or try to excuse yourself from it (Diary, 742).

Like the Gospel command, “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful”, this demand that we show mercy to our neighbours “always and everywhere” seems impossible to fulfil. But the Lord assures us that it is possible. **When a soul approaches Me with trust**, He explains, **I fill it with such an abundance of graces that it cannot contain them within itself, but radiates them to other souls** (1074).

How do we “radiate” God’s mercy to others? By our actions, our words, and our prayers. **In these three degrees**, He tells St. Faustina, **is contained the fullness of mercy** (742). We have all been called to this threefold practice of mercy, but we are not all called in the same way. We need to ask the Lord, who understands our individual personalities and situations, to help us recognize the various ways we can each live His mercy in our daily lives.

Putting mercy into action is not an option of the Divine Mercy message and devotion; it’s a requirement!

Repeatedly, in His conversations with Sister Faustina, the Lord spoke of His merciful response to souls that trust in Him. “I desire to grant unimaginable graces”, He told her, “to those souls who trust in My Mercy Sooner would heaven and earth turn into nothingness than would My mercy not embrace a trusting soul” (Diary 687, 1777). Over and over again He stressed that He could never reject a repentant heart, never refuse an appeal to His Mercy.