

The Divine Mercy Image



This is the Divine Mercy Image – an image given by Jesus to a Polish nun, Saint Faustina Kowalska, in the 1930s. Jesus wanted to give us a powerful reminder of who God is and has been from the very beginning. This truth that God is in His very nature Love and Mercy Itself, is given to us by our Judeo-Christian faith and God’s self-revelation in the Gospels.

Jesus’ right hand is raised in blessing, his left is drawing aside his robe near his heart to allow the two rays to shine upon us. The rays represent the blood and water that poured forth from His heart when he was pierced by a lance at the crucifixion. He is stepping toward us, not waiting for us to come to Him but taking the first step. And the words “Jesus, I trust in you” were given by Him as a reminder of the need to trust Him to receive His mercy. For more about the image, [click here](#).

The message of The Divine Mercy is simple. It is that God loves us – all of us. And, he wants us to recognize that His mercy is greater than our sins, so that we will call upon Him with trust, receive His mercy, and let it flow through us to others. Thus, all will come to share His joy.

Details of the Image:

As recounted by her spiritual director, Blessed Michael Sopocho, St. Faustina was very demanding about certain details of the Image. By examining these details, we can begin to understand better what this Image of Jesus means, and why we can count on His keeping the promises He made about venerating it.

Dark background: The world is in darkness without Jesus

Illumination of Image: Jesus is the Light in the Darkness showing us the way

The Wounds in feet, hands, and side: This is an image of the Risen Christ

Right hand raised: Jesus always desires to bless us with the grace we need to be holy

Left hand drawing aside his robe: Jesus is opening His Heart to fill us with His love

Red and pale rays: The blood and water that poured forth when He was pierced with a lance

The pale or "white" ray: The water that poured forth from Christ's side indicates the cleansing of Baptism and Reconciliation

The red ray: The blood that poured from the side of Christ indicates the life-carrying power of the Eucharist

White robe: Jesus wears the robe of the priesthood

Eyes looking downward: "My gaze from this image is such as the gaze from the cross" (Diary, 326)

Left foot stepping forward: The Lord is not waiting for us to come to Him, he who makes the first move

Signature: Jesus I Trust in You is a reminder of the need to trust in God's mercy and the one who obtained mercy for us.

Jesus gave Saint Faustina:

- **3 ways to live His Mercy daily: In Deed, Word, and Prayer**
- **5 forms of devotion to The Divine Mercy**
- **The Image of Divine Mercy**
- **The Feast of Divine Mercy**
- **The Chaplet of Divine Mercy**
- **The Novena of Divine Mercy**
- **The Hour of Divine Mercy**

Jesus also instructed her to write all He told her in a Diary which has become a spiritual classic, chronicling Saint Faustina's miraculous experiences of Divine Mercy in her soul and the mission Christ gave her to share that mercy with the world.

Jesus commissioned St. Faustina to have a special image painted, an image that would reflect His Mercy and help spread the message of His great love. He wanted the world to know His mercy through this image and grants many special graces through it.

In the evening, when I was in my cell, I saw the Lord Jesus clothed in a white garment. One hand [was] raised in the gesture of blessing, the other was touching the garment at the breast. From beneath the garment, slightly drawn aside at the breast, there were emanating two large rays, one red, the other pale. In silence, I kept my gaze fixed on the Lord; my soul was struck with awe, but also with great joy. After a while, Jesus said to me, "Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You. I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel, and [then] throughout the world." (Diary, 47)

"I am offering people a vessel with which they are to keep coming for graces to the fountain of mercy. That vessel is this image with the signature; 'Jesus, I trust in You.'" (Diary, 327)

During prayer, I heard these words within me: "The two rays denote Blood and Water. The pale ray stands for the Water which makes souls righteous. The red ray stands for the Blood which is the life of souls... These two rays issued forth from the very depths of My tender mercy when My agonized Heart was opened by a lance on the Cross." (Diary,299) "My gaze from this image is like My gaze from the cross." (Diary, 326)

History of the Image:

Many images of the Divine Mercy have been created over the years but there is one original image.

The one depicted here was painted in the year 1934 by Eugene Kazimirowski in Vilnius (at the time a city in Poland, but presently in Lithuania) as St. Faustina Kowalska was describing to him how Jesus looked in a vision she received in 1931. The image was venerated publicly for the first time from April 26-28, 1935 during the closing celebration of the 1900th Jubilee of Redemption at the Shrine of Our Lady of Mercy, a chapel in that city called "The Dawn Gate." In 1937 the Image was hung near the main altar in St. Michael's Church in Vilnius of which Sister Faustina's confessor, now "Blessed" Michael Sopoćko, was the rector, and where it remained until 1948, when the church was converted into a museum of architecture by the Communist government.

The image was then taken to the Holy Spirit Church on Dominican Street not far from the Cathedral, but then removed and placed in the village church of Nowa Ruda (now in Belarus), where it remained for 40 years. For a while it was hidden in an attic to prevent it from being destroyed by the government. In 1982 the image was again brought to the Holy Spirit Church in Vilnius where in 1986, because of damage sustained from handling along the years, the painting was retouched by a local artist. In the process, the original appearance of the Lord's face was changed. Then in 1987 the Image was again enshrined in one of the side altars, but access to it was limited.

Finally, under the guidance of the Archbishop of Vilnius, Cardinal J. Backis, in May of 2003 the image underwent professional restoration and conservation. Meanwhile, the little Church of the Holy Trinity, a very short walking distance from Holy Spirit Church, which the government gave back to the Archdiocese, but in a severely damaged state, was restored with the aid of substantial funds from Members of the Association of Marian Helpers in the U.S.A. It was re-dedicated on the Feast of Mercy 2004, and the restored Divine Mercy Image was enshrined there in September of 2005.

Although different versions of this Image have been painted, the "Vilnius" Image was the only one painted under Saint Faustina's personal direction to the artist. Sadly complaining, "Lord, who will paint You as beautiful as You are?" (Diary, 313), the Sister had the artist change Jesus' face at least 10 times. Finally, Our Lord told her that it was good enough, and should be left in the final state it was in.

In the mid 1990's it was accidentally discovered in the U.S.A. that this final attempt at rendering Our Lord's Face in The Divine Mercy Image matches the face of the "man" on the Holy Shroud of Turin with mysterious accuracy.

Jesus told St. Faustina: Not in the beauty of the color, nor of the brush [that is, the artist's painting ability] lies the greatness of this image, but in My grace (Diary, 313). So, no matter which version of the Image one prefers, we can be assured that, when prayed over and blessed, it becomes an instrument of God's grace to be revered [that is, regarded with deep respect, love, and awe, as something sacred] with trust in His goodness to keep His promises made about it.