

Special 'Feast of Mercy' Easter novena uses prayer to rekindle faith

Easter is almost upon us! The Sunday after Easter is the Feast of Divine Mercy. In preparation for this great day, "the very day that the Lord Himself chose for the manifestation of His mercy," according to Blessed Faustina, a special nine day novena begins on Good Friday and concludes with a major celebration on Mercy Sunday, The Day of Grace.

On the first day of the novena you are to pray to bring to Jesus all mankind, especially sinners. On the second day, bring to Jesus the souls of priests and religious; the third day, all devout and faithful souls, the fourth day, those who do not believe in

God and those who do not yet know Him; the fifth day, all the souls of those who have separated themselves from His church; the sixth day, the meek and humble souls and the souls of little children; the seventh day, the souls who especially venerate and glorify His mercy; the eighth day, the souls who are detained in purgatory; the ninth day, souls who have become lukewarm.

After you say a prayer for the nine specific days, follow it with praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet daily. This is how to pray the chaplet: (1) Say the "Our Father." (2) Say the "Hail Mary." (3) Say

the "Apostles Creed." (4) On the rosary beads, on the large bead before each decade, say the "Eternal Father" prayer which goes like this: "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." (5) On the small beads of each decade, say the "For the sake of ..." prayer, which is said this way: 'For the sake of His sorrowful passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.' In each decade, meditate on Christ's passion particularly His abandonment at the hour of

death. (6) After the 5th decade, say the Holy God .." prayer three times. This is how that prayer goes: "Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world."

On April 11, St. Paul's Catholic Church will be celebrating the Feast of Divine Mercy, starting at 1:30 p.m. and saying the chaplet at 3 p.m. (EDST) Confessors will be available 1:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. Benediction will be around 4:30 p.m.

The benefit of saying the novena, starting on Good Friday and concluding it on Divine Mercy Sunday is that our Lord

promises to grant complete forgiveness of sins and punishment for the Feast of Mercy. Christ said to Blessed Faustina, "I want to grant a complete pardon to the souls that will go to confession and receive Holy Communion on the Feast of My Mercy. Whoever approaches the Fountain of Life on this day will be granted complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. The soul that will go to confession and receive Holy Communion will obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment."

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Christianity is God reaching people to establish relationship, not religion

This letter is written in response to Jeff and Joe [redacted] letter of March 6 in Readers Write. First of all I have not seen the so-called anti-Catholic letter. I suppose it all depends on what side of the fence you are on. Are we to consider Jesus and the apostles anti-Jewish because they preached to the Jews about God's sacrificial love, forgiveness, repentance from sin, reconciliation and eternal life? I think the prophet Jonah would be considered anti-Ninevite because he did not want to preach God's message of repentance and forgiveness to them. Jonah wanted God to destroy the Ninevites.

People who want to preach the gospel to Catholics want to see Catholics become true Christians just like when Apostle Paul preached to the Jews so that they would become true Jews circumcised of the heart instead of just circumcised of the flesh. (Romans 2:28, 29)

Likewise a Catholic who is baptized is not truly born again unless he or she is circumcised of the

heart by the Holy Spirit. This takes place only when an individual makes a personal commitment to trust Christ and follow Him. (Acts 11:14-18; John 3:3-8, 7:37-39)

Secondly the tenets of the faith must be taught according to the scriptures. I Corinthians 15:1-5 states, "By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you ... that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures."

The scriptures in the book of Hebrews state, "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." (9:22) The catechism of the Catholic church states that the Mass is a bloodless sacrifice (CCC 1367). The scriptures in Hebrews 10:11-18 proclaim that Jesus' sacrifice was once for all. The Catholic catechism proclaims that in the Mass, "the work of our redemption is carried on." (CCC 1405) God's word in Hebrews testifies that the blessings of Christ's sacrifice belong to those who live by faith. (10:26-39; 11:1-40; 12:1-3)

The catechism testifies that Jesus' offering on the cross is united

with the "praises, sufferings, prayers and work" of the Catholic participants (CCC 1368-1370) and this united offering is given to God to take away sin (CCC 1368-1370, 1393).

The Catholic church does not teach the good news of Christ's sacrifice according to the scriptures. (Isaiah 64:5-6) clearly says that all our righteous acts are like filthy rags. The Apostle Paul testifies in the book of Philippians 3:1-9 "whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ ... I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him .. the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith."

Another point was the role faith and works play in our salvation and justification. Ephesians 2:8-10 reads, "For by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

James' point in 2:14-18 was not that faith and works are both necessary for justification and salvation, but that if your so-called faith is not followed by good deeds then you probably have not really been saved. Your faith is useless if it is based on head knowledge and not on a true heartfelt faith in Christ's saving work. This idea is supported by James 2:19 which follows the passage and states, "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that — and shudder."

The last point was about God not hating religion and not hating at all. So I looked it up and found Isaiah 1:10-17, verses 13 and 14 read "stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me ... your New Moon feasts and your appointed feasts My soul hates."

One of the reasons God hated their religious practices was because they were becoming a harlot by co-mingling with the pagan religions around them. Isaiah wrote in 1:21 "see how the faithful city has become a harlot."

What do we see today? We see a focus on the similarities among religions and how each can achieve salvation through the dictator of their conscience. God hates religion because today it is defined as man's way of reaching God through faith and works.

Christianity is God reaching down to man through Jesus to establish a relationship not a religion. Jesus prayed to His Father in John 17:26 "that the love you have for Me may be in them and that I myself may be in them." (see also Colossians 2:1-23)

The scriptures also do not define hate as a petty human emotion. In Psalm 119:103, 104 we read, "How sweet are your promises to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path.." (See Matthew 7:13, 14 and John 14:6)

Open your heart, soul and mind to the One True Savior Jesus. (Matthew 22:37; John 8:31, 32)

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