

The Divine Mercy Cenacle



LESSON THREE

The Image of The Divine Mercy

On February 22, 1931, Our Lord appeared to St. Faustina in a vision in her small cell (room). It was the Risen Lord; He was clothed in the white garment of a High Priest. His hands and feet bore the marks of the Crucifixion. His right hand was raised in blessing. His left hand was touching his garment in the area of the Heart, from where two large rays came forth, one red and the other pale. Jesus asked her to paint an image according to the pattern she saw in a vision with the signature: "Jesus I trust in You."

He told her:

"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'" (327*). And on another occasion, the Lord said: "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 depths of My tender mercy when My agonized heart was opened by a lance on the Cross" (299).

1. In what way do the rays symbolize the Sacraments?

The red rays which stand for the Blood symbolize the Eucharist, which is the life of souls. The pale rays that stand for the water symbolize the Sacrament of Baptism and Reconciliation which cleanse the soul.

Just as blood carries oxygen to every cell in our body and sustains life, the Eucharist is the food that sustains our spiritual life. And, just as water purifies and cleanses, the Sacrament of Baptism and Reconciliation cleanse our souls and make them pure. The Image therefore represents the Sacraments of Mercy.

2. How does the Image summarize the mystery of our redemption?

The Image is like a triple-exposure photograph, an icon, manifesting the Paschal Mystery — the Last Supper, Passion, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord.

First it recalls the Gospel image of Jesus' resurrection appearance on Easter Sunday night. We see the risen Jesus entering through the locked doors with His right hand raised, bestowing a blessing. With the other hand, Jesus draws the garment at the breast showing rays emanating from His heart.

The Image also points to Jesus on Good Friday — the crucifixion. when His side was pierced by a lance. Out of His Heart flowed streams of Blood and Water — a fountain of Mercy to wash away our guilt and heal all the wounds caused by sin.

Finally, the Image draws us to the Last Supper on Holy Thursday, when Jesus instituted the Eucharist and asked that

it be celebrated as the memorial of His suffering and death. He is dressed in the white linen vestment of the High Priest of the Jewish Temple. Only the High Priest was allowed to wear this garment as he entered into the Holy of Holies of the Temple to offer the blood of the sacrificed lamb without blemish. Emerging from the inner sanctuary he would raise his right hand and offer God's blessing to the people. (Lv 16:1-4; Sir 50:18-21).

The Image powerfully manifests Jesus as the High Priest, the perfect self-sacrifice through which He has achieved redemption for all mankind.

3. What was Sr. Faustina's reaction to the Image painted by the artist.

When she saw the Image painted by Kazimirowski, (which was commissioned by Fr. Michael Sopocko, her spiritual director) Sr. Faustina felt deeply saddened and disappointed. Calling out to the Lord she said, "Who will paint You as beautiful as You are?" Interiorly she heard these words, "Not in the beauty of the color, nor of the brush lies the greatness of this image, but in My grace (313).

4. What does "venerate" mean?

To venerate simply means to regard with great respect and reverence the person portrayed in the image. It is much like a photograph of a loved one. It is not the picture in the frame that we honor but the loved one whose memory we cherish.

Likewise we do not venerate the painting on the canvas but rather the Lord Jesus whom this image represents. Therefore, Christian veneration of images is not an idolatry.

5. Our Lord attached many promises to those who venerate the Image. What are those promises?

The Lord said, "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" (327). "I promise that the soul that 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" (48).

6. There are many *Diary* quotes on the Eucharist, and the message is a Eucharistic one. What does the Image have to do with the Eucharist?

The Jesus depicted in the Divine Mercy Image is the same Jesus who is sacramentally present in the Blessed Sacrament. Saint Faustina saw the same rays as in the Image also emanating from the Monstrance. The logo of the Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy is the Host with the Rays of Blood and Water coming forth from It. We are to receive the Eucharist and let God's mercy flood every cell in our body. We are to become Him, whom we receive. Then, we are to let those same Rays go out to a hurting world. Saint Faustina understood the Eucharist and wrote, "If the angels were capable of envy, they would envy us for two things: one is the receiving of Holy Communion, and the other is suffering" (1804). On another occasion she wrote, "Holy Communion gives me strength to suffer and fight" (1509). And, "I have come to know that Holy Communion remains in me until the next Holy Communion... My heart is a living tabernacle in which the living Host is reserved" (1302).

The message of Divine Mercy is a Eucharistic message. Christ offered His Body and Blood for us in atonement for our sins, and offers continually His Body and Blood for our nourishment. We are called to live a Eucharistic life. We are to receive Holy Communion as if it were our First Holy Communion; we should also receive as if it were our last as we never know when God will call us home.

* References without a source listed with the number are taken from the *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina*.



Marians of the Immaculate Conception

www.thedivinemercy.org • 1-800-462-7426

Copyright © 2006 Congregation of the Marian of the Immaculate Conception All rights reserved.