

Alter Christus

*“As an **alter Christus** (another Christ) the priest is in Christ, for Christ and with Christ... Because he belongs to Christ, the priest is radically at the service of all people: he is the minister of their salvation” (Pope Benedict XVI)*

Monthly bulletin dedicated to all the Priests of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

This Month's Reading:

Saint Faustina Kowalska

Dear Father,

One of the most famous devotions in PNG is, without any doubt, the Devotion to the Divine Mercy. Although being a rather recent devotion, it has already spread throughout the whole world, and our parishioners are very sensitive to it.

This month's reading comes from the Diary of Saint Faustina, called *Divine Mercy in My Soul*. The book is based on the contents of her diary from 1925 until her death in 1938.

At the end of the book, there are three precious conversations between the merciful God and different kinds of souls: 1) sinners who feel desperate and think that God's mercy will never forgive

them; 2) those who suffer and find not consolation; 3) and those who want to become holy but still struggle against sin and fall very often.

Although being priests and serving Jesus for many years, we can also identified ourselves with one of these three kinds of souls. How often we commit sin, and distrust God's mercy! How often we suffer, and find no consolation! How often we fall into sin, besides the many promises made and resolutions taken!

This short bulletin can help us to raise once again our eyes to the crucified Christ and recall what He himself said to Saint Faustina: "Remember, my

child: You are dealing with the God of mercy, which your misery cannot exhaust. Remember, I did not allot only a certain number of pardons."

What a consolation and solace these words bring! Although being priests and "dealing" with holy things every day, we are still sinners begging for mercy. And

that -the humility of acknowledging our own miseries and confronting them with God's infinite mercy- can become the begin of a new conversion and holy life.

God bless you!

Fr. Tomás Ravaioli, IVE

LCI Director

Author: Saint Faustina Kowalska

Saint Faustina was born on August 25, 1905 in Glogowiec, Poland of a poor and religious family of peasants, the third of 10 children. From a very tender age she stood out because of her love of prayer, work, obedience, and also her sensitivity to the poor. At the age of seven she had already felt the first stirrings of a religious vocation. After finishing school, she wanted to enter the convent, but her parents would not give her permission.

The Lord Jesus chose Saint Faustina as the Apostle and "Secretary" of His Mercy, so that she could tell the world about His great message, which she recorded in a diary she titled *Divine Mercy in My Soul*.



In an extraordinary way, Sr. Maria Faustina's work sheds light on the mystery of the Divine Mercy. It delights not only the simple and uneducated people, but also scholars who look upon it as an additional source of theological research.

Sister Maria Faustina, consumed by tuberculosis and by innumerable sufferings which she accepted as a voluntary sacrifice for sinners, died in Krakow at the age of just 33 on October 5, 1938. She was canonized on April 30, 2000. Saint Faustina's remains rest at the Sanctuary of the Divine Mercy in Krakow-Lagiewniki.

Conversation of the Merciful God With Three Different Souls

By Saint Faustina Kowalksa

Conversation of the Merciful God With a Despairing Soul

Jesus: **O soul steeped in darkness, do not despair. All is not yet lost. Come and confide in your God, who is love and mercy.**

- But the soul, deaf even to this appeal, wraps itself in darkness.

Jesus calls out again: **My child, listen to the voice of your merciful Father.**

- In the soul arises this reply: "For me there is no mercy," and it falls into greater darkness, a despair which is a foretaste of hell and makes it unable to draw near God.

Jesus calls to the soul a third time, but the soul remains deaf and blind, hardened and despairing. Then the mercy of God begins to exert itself, and, without any co-operation from the soul, God grants it final grace. If this too is spurned, God will leave the soul in this self-chosen disposition for eternity. This grace emerges from the merciful Heart of Jesus and gives the soul a special light by means of which the soul begins to understand God's effort; but conversion depends on its

own will. The soul knows that this, for her, is final grace and, should it show even a flicker of good will, the mercy of God will accomplish the rest.

My omnipotent mercy is active here. Happy the soul that takes advantage of this grace.

Jesus: **What joy fills My Heart when you return to me. Because you are weak, I take you in My arms and carry you to the home of My Father.**

Soul (as if awaking, asks fearfully): Is it possible that there yet is mercy for me?

Jesus: **There is, My child. You have a special claim on My mercy. Let it act in your poor soul; let the rays of grace enter your soul; they bring with them light, warmth, and life.**

Soul: But fear fills me at the thought of my sins, and this terrible fear moves me to doubt Your goodness.

Jesus: **My child, all your sins have not wounded My Heart as painfully as your present lack of trust does – that after so many efforts of My love and mercy, you should still doubt My goodness.**

Soul: O Lord, save me Yourself, for I perish. Be my Savior. O Lord, I am

unable to say anything more; my pitiful heart is torn asunder; but You, O Lord.....

Jesus does not let the soul finish but, raising it from the ground, from the depths of its misery, he leads it into the recesses of His Heart where all its sins disappear instantly, consumed by the flames of love.

Jesus: **Here, soul, are all the treasures of My Heart. Take everything you need from it.**

Soul: O Lord, I am inundated with Your grace. I sense that a new life has entered into me and, above all, I feel Your love in my heart. That is enough for me. O Lord, I will glorify the omnipotence of Your mercy for all eternity. Encouraged by Your goodness, I will confide to You all the sorrows of my heart.

Jesus: **Tell me all, My child, hide nothing from Me, because My loving Heart, the Heart of your Best Friend, is listening to you.**

Soul: O Lord, now I see all my ingratitude and Your goodness. You were pursuing me with Your grace, while I was frustrating Your benevolence. I see that I deserve the depths of hell for spurning Your graces.

Jesus (interrupting): **Do not be absorbed in your misery – you are still too weak to speak of it – but, rather; gaze on My Heart filled with**

goodness, and be imbued with My sentiments. Strive for meekness and humility; be merciful to others, as I am to you; and, when you feel your strength failing, if you come to the fountain of mercy to fortify your soul, you will not grow weary on your journey.

Soul: Now I understand Your mercy, which protects me, and like a brilliant star, leads me into the home of my Father, protecting me from the horrors of hell that I have deserved, not once, but a thousand times. O Lord, eternity will hardly suffice for me to give due praise to

Your unfathomable mercy and Your compassion for me.

Conversation of the Merciful God With a Suffering Soul

Jesus: **Poor soul, I see that you suffer much and that you do not have even the strength to converse with me. So I will speak to you. Even though your sufferings were very great, do not lose heart or give in to despondency. But tell Me, my child, who has dared to wound your heart? Tell me about everything, be sincere in dealing with Me, reveal all the wounds of your heart. I will heal them, and your suffering will become a source of your sanctification.**



Soul: Lord, my sufferings are so great and numerous and have lasted so long that I become discouraged.

Jesus: **My child, do not be discouraged. I know your boundless trust in Me; I know you are aware of My goodness and mercy. Let us talk in detail about everything that weighs so heavily upon your heart.**

Soul: There are so many different things that I do not know what to speak about first, nor how to express it.

Jesus: **Talk to Me simply, as a friend to a friend. Tell Me now, My child, what hinders you from advancing in holiness?**

Soul: Poor health detains me on the way to holiness. I cannot fulfill my duties. I am as useless as an extra wheel on a wagon. I cannot mortify myself or fast to any extent, as the saints did. Furthermore, nobody believes I am sick, so that mental pain is added to those of the body, and I am often humiliated. Jesus, how can anyone become holy in such circumstances?

Jesus: **True, my child, all that is painful. But there is no way to heaven except the way of the cross. I followed it first. You must learn that it is the shortest and surest way.**

Soul: Lord, there is another obstacle on the road to holiness. Because I am faithful to You, I am persecuted and suffer much.

Jesus: **It is because you are not of this world that the world hates you. First it persecuted Me. Persecution is a sign that you are following in My footsteps faithfully.**

Soul: My Lord, I am also discouraged because neither my superiors nor my confessor understand my interior trials. A darkness clouds my mind. How can I advance? All this discourages me from striving for the heights of sanctity.

Jesus: **Well, My child, this time you have told Me a good deal. I realize how painful it is not to be understood, and especially by those whom one loves and with whom one has been very open. But suffice it**

to know that I understand all your troubles and misery. I am pleased by the deep faith you have, despite everything, in My representatives. Learn from this that no one will understand a soul entirely – that is beyond human ability. Therefore, I have remained on earth to comfort your aching heart and to fortify your soul, so that you will not falter on the way. You say that a dense darkness is obscuring your mind. But why, at such times, do you not come to Me, the light who can in an instant pour into your soul more understanding about holiness than can be found in any books? No confessor is capable of teaching and enlightening a soul in this way.

Know, too, that the darkness about which you complain I first endured in the Garden of Olives when My Soul was crushed in mortal anguish. I am giving you a share in those sufferings because of My special love for you and

in view of the high degree of holiness I am intending for you in heaven. A suffering soul is closest to My Heart.

Soul: One more thing, Lord. What should I do when I am ignored and rejected by people, especially by those on whom I had a right to count in times of greatest need?

Jesus: My child, make the resolution never to rely on people. Entrust yourself completely to My will saying, “Not as I want, but according to Your will, O God, let it be done unto me.” These words, spoken from the depths of one’s heart, can raise a soul to the summit of sanctity in a short time. In such a soul I delight. Such a soul gives Me glory. Such a soul fills heaven with the fragrance of her virtue. But understand that the strength by which you bear sufferings comes from frequent Communion. So approach this fountain of mercy often, to draw with the vessel of trust whatever you need.



Soul: Thank You, Lord, for Your goodness in remaining with us in this exile as the God of mercy and blessing us with the radiance of Your compassion and goodness. It is through the light of Your mercy that I have come to understand how much You love me.

Conversation of the Merciful God with a Soul Striving after Perfection

Jesus: **I am pleased with your efforts, O soul aspiring for perfection, but why do I see you so often sad and depressed? Tell Me, My child, what is the meaning of this sadness, and what is its cause?**

Soul: Lord, the reason for my sadness is that, in spite of my sincere resolutions, I fall again into the same faults. I make resolutions in the morning, but in the evenings I see how much I have departed from them.

Jesus: **You see, My child, what you are of yourself. The cause of your falls is that you rely too much upon yourself and too little on Me. But let this not sadden you so much. You are dealing with the God of mercy, which your misery cannot exhaust. Remember, I did not allot only a certain number of pardons.**

Soul: Yes, I know all that, but great temptations assail me, and various

doubts awaken within me and, moreover, everything irritates and discourages me.

Jesus: **My child, know that the greatest obstacles to holiness are discouragement and an exaggerated anxiety. These will deprive you of the ability to practice virtue. All temptations united together ought not disturb your interior peace, not even momentarily. Sensitiveness and discouragement are the fruits of self-love. You should not become discouraged, but strive to make My love reign in place of your self-love. Have confidence, My child. Do not lose heart in coming for pardon, for I am always ready to forgive you. As**

often as you beg for it, you glorify My mercy.

Soul: I understand what is the better thing to do, what pleases You more, but I encounter great obstacles in acting on this understanding.

Jesus: **My child, life on earth is a struggle indeed; a great struggle for My kingdom. But fear not, because you are not alone. I am always supporting you, so lean on Me as you struggle,**

fearing nothing. Take the vessel of trust and draw from the fountain of life – for yourself, but also for other souls, especially such as are distrustful of My goodness.

Soul: O Lord, I feel my heart being filled with Your love and the rays of

Your mercy and love piercing my soul. I go, Lord, at Your command. I go to conquer souls. Sustained by Your grace, I am ready to follow You, Lord, not only to Tabor, but also to Calvary. I desire to lead souls to the fount of Your mercy so that the splendor of Your mercy may be reflected in all souls, and the home of our Father be filled to overflowing. And when the enemy begins to attach me, I shall take refuge behind the shield of Your mercy.

Few Directives

February 3, [1938]. Today after Holy Communion, Jesus again gave me a few directives:

“**First**, do not fight against a temptation by yourself, but disclose it to the confessor at once, and then the temptation will lose all its force. **Second**, during these ordeals do not lose your peace; live in My presence; ask My Mother and the Saints for help. **Third**, have the certitude that I am looking at you and supporting you. **Fourth**, do not fear either struggles of

the soul or any temptations, because I am supporting you; if only you are willing to fight, know that the victory is always on your side. **Fifth**, know that by fighting bravely you give Me great glory and amass merits for yourself. Temptation gives you a chance to show Me your fidelity.

And now I am going to tell you something that is most important for you: **Boundless sincerity with your spiritual director**. If you do not take advantage of this great grace according to My instructions, I will take him away from you, and then you will be left to yourself; and all the torments, which you know very well, will return to you. It displeases Me that you do not take advantage of the opportunity when you are able to see him and talk with him. Know that it is a great grace on My part when I give a spiritual director to a soul. Many souls ask Me for this, but it is not to all that I grant this grace. From the moment when I gave you this priest as spiritual director, I endowed him with new light so that he might easily know and understand your soul.”



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