

APPENDIX C

DIVINE MERCY INDULGENCES -- EXPLAINED

Q. What is the “special grace” we can receive on Divine Mercy Sunday?

A. Complete forgiveness of all of our sins and the removal of all punishment of past sins.

*Jesus desires that the first Sunday after Easter be the Feast of Mercy. He wants the whole world to know of His great mercy. **Whoever approaches the Fount of Life (to receive Holy Communion) on this day will be granted complete remission of sins and punishment** (Diary of St. Faustina Kowalska, 299-300). Those who receive Holy Communion on Divine Mercy Sunday in the state of grace and with the disposition of trust in His merciful love will receive most extraordinary spiritual benefits. **To receive those special graces -- “the complete forgiveness of sins and punishment” ...in other words, a complete renewal of baptismal grace in our hearts – all we need to do is receive Holy communion in a state of grace on Divine Mercy Sunday, with trust in our Lord’s great mercy.***

Jesus told St Faustina that “The graces of my mercy are drawn by means of one vessel only, and that is—trust. The more a soul trusts, the more it will receive (Diary 1578).

Confession and Divine Mercy Sunday – *Whether your last confession was 10, 20, or even more days before Divine Mercy Sunday, as long as you do not have the stain of unconfessed mortal sin on your soul, then you are spiritually alive in Christ and able to receive His special grace from Holy Communion on that great feast day!*

Q. Why did Pope St. John Paul II make the decree of a Plenary Indulgence for special acts of devotion to The Divine Mercy on Divine Mercy Sunday?

A. The Holy See wanted to ensure that the faithful could experience the Mercy of the Lord in a special way on this Feast Day, in the hope that then they might be inspired to be more merciful to others (cf. Lk 6:36), and to be able to offer this grace in a particular way: to the Holy Souls in Purgatory.

It is important to note that the Church’s provision of the indulgence for Divine Mercy Sunday devotions does not constitute either a substitute for, nor an official endorsement of, the extraordinary graces promised by our Lord to St. Faustina for those who receive Holy Communion with trust in God’s mercy on that day. (This private revelation is a promise of Jesus to St. Faustina. This promise made is the complete renewal of baptismal grace, the “extraordinary grace” par excellence of Divine Mercy Sunday – something even greater than a plenary indulgence.) The plenary indulgence offered by the Church is therefore an opportunity to receive additional graces on this extraordinary feast day, which the faithful can mercifully offer to a Holy Soul in purgatory. (Note: a plenary indulgence can only be offered for oneself or for a deceased soul in purgatory.)

Ideally, the faithful would seek to obtain the plenary indulgence on this day for the sake of souls suffering in purgatory, even while, at one and the same time, they are receiving for themselves the “extraordinary grace” of Holy Communion on Divine Mercy Sunday, in accordance with our Lord’s promises to St. Faustina (that is, that they do so while in the state of grace and while having complete trust in Jesus’ love and mercy). What a tremendous opportunity this is to receive a special outpouring of God’s mercy, both upon oneself and for others, all on the same day!

The above is excerpted from “Understanding Divine Mercy Sunday”, John Paul II Institute of Divine Mercy, Congregation of the Marians of the Immaculate Conception, Stockbridge, MA, 2003. *Nihil Obstat. Imprimi Potest.*

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