St. Faustina Kowalska
October 5

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1905–1938 • Poland

A simple Polish nun, Sr. Faustina Kowalska did not seem at all remarkable. She had grown up in a poor family and had finished only three years of school. Her duties at the convent were to cook, garden, and watch at the convent gate. But this simple nun had remarkable love for Jesus. Nothing made her happier than being with Jesus in the Eucharist.

On the evening of February 22, 1931, Sr. Faustina felt a sudden presence in her room. There stood a man dressed in white. Her heart leapt as she recognized Jesus. He held up His right hand in blessing. His left hand touched His breast, from which streamed rays of red and white light.

Silently and full of awe and joy, Sr. Faustina gazed on Jesus. Then, Jesus spoke to Sr. Faustina, saying, "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. I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish." Sr. Faustina confided to the priest who heard her confessions what Jesus had told her. Together, they commissioned an image of Jesus as He had appeared to Sr. Faustina.

Jesus also instructed Sr. Faustina to write down in her diary all that He told her. He wanted Sr. Faustina to be the messenger of His Divine Mercy to the whole world! He taught her a special chaplet to pray at 3:00 p.m., the Hour of Mercy when He had died on the Cross. He also wanted His Divine Mercy to be celebrated the first Sunday after Easter.

Sr. Faustina experienced great union with God. Her heart was full of love for Him, and she spent her life spreading the devotion to Jesus' Divine Mercy to sinners throughout the world. In her last days, she suffered from tuberculosis and died a holy death at the age of thirty-three, the same age that Jesus had died on the Cross.

Almost thirty years after her death, the archbishop of Krakow sent Sr. Faustina's diary to the Vatican. This Polish archbishop would one day become Pope St. John Paul II. When he was pope, he instituted the Feast of the Divine Mercy on the first Sunday after Easter, just as Jesus had asked. Jesus wants us to be devoted to His image of Divine Mercy and to pray the Divine Mercy chaplet so that He can shower His mercy on the whole world.

St. Faustina Kowalska, help us to trust in Jesus' mercy!