

An Easter Journey with St Faustina: Considering Themes of Joy, Hope and Resurrection

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I am absolutely convinced that St. Faustina and St. Therese are in cahoots for the greater good of mankind. I also believe that the two of them are best friends, pray and concoct all sorts of great wonderful things together. Much like my nineteen-year-old daughter Kathryn who has me wrapped around her finger, these two have Jesus wrapped around their fingers and Jesus couldn't be more pleased.

St. Faustina wrote of St. Therese [150], "before entering the convent, I had a great devotion to her . . . on the fifth day of my novena to her, I dreamed she was still living on earth . . . she hid from me the fact that she was a saint . . . she began to comfort me, that I should not be worried, but that I should trust more in God." "Sister, know that in three days the difficulty will come to a happy conclusion," St. Therese told her. When St. Faustina was not ready to believe her, St Therese did reveal to her that indeed she was a Saint. A great joy filled her soul. "Dear sweet Therese, tell me, shall I go to heaven?" "And will I be a Saint?" To both, Therese replied yes. "But, little Therese, shall I be a Saint as you are, raised to the altar?" Therese once again responds affirmatively, but adds, "You must trust in the Lord Jesus."

Jesus tells St. Faustina [1578], "The graces of My mercy are drawn by means of one vessel only, and that is trust. The more the soul trusts, the more it will receive. Souls that trust boundlessly are a great comfort to me . . . I pour all the treasures of my graces into them." Jesus states in (Mark 5:36), "Do not be afraid. Just have faith."

These two Saints clearly had a role in the conversion I often talk about. But, today is St. Faustina's day.

I returned to the church almost a year ago. I had been away for almost five years. It was the day after Easter. It was Therese's book; "Maurice and Therese – A Story of a Love," written by my good friend Bishop Patrick Ahern that made me realize what I was looking for was right here. I attended Mass on the first Sunday after Easter, which is Divine Mercy Sunday. I had no idea what it was or what it meant. I would soon find out. For the first time I saw an image of Jesus with rays (water and blood) (blue and red) coming from His heart with the inscription on the bottom, "Jesus I Trust in You." Little did I know that Jesus told St. Faustina [88], "I desire that this image be displayed on the first Sunday after Easter. That Sunday is the Feast of Mercy." He had dictated to her how he wanted the image painted. After all, she was His Secretary.

To think we sometimes think we run things.

I learned so much from Dr. Charles Stanley, a Baptist tele-evangelist in the first few months of last year, more than in all of my first fifty-two years here on earth. All of a sudden, it was making so much sense to me. Dr. Stanley often said that people (like himself) sometime play a small, but integral role in God's greater plan. I shall be forever grateful. But then Jesus handed this portion over to His Apostle of Divine Mercy, St. Faustina. Jesus tells St. Faustina [1588], "I do not want to punish aching mankind, but I desire to heal it." Jesus further tells St. Faustina, that on the day of the Feast of Divine Mercy, ". . . bring fainting souls to the spring of My mercy. I shall heal and strengthen them."

The evening before my first mass, I watched a movie about St. Faustina. It is where I first learned of her. Nuns were lining up at the confessional after they realized who this remarkable woman was. Their opinions, condemnations, and judgments of her needed to be confessed and forgiven. They had not adhered to Jesus' most important commandment, "To love one another." Jesus tells St. Faustina [67], "Your prolonged suffering will give them the light and strength to accept My will." St. Faustina writes [92], "Humiliation is my daily food . . . the bride herself must share in His cloak of mockery . . . when I receive Jesus in Holy Communion, I ask Him to heal my tongue so that I would offend neither God nor neighbor." Her love of neighbor was second to her love of the Eucharist. Was part of her suffering because she understood it so well, while others knew so little? She wanted all to enjoy what she knew.

By this time, I had confessed my sins in the comfort and privacy of my bedroom. I still had pride. I wasn't ready for a trip to the confessional. I received communion on Divine Mercy Sunday. Jesus tells St. Faustina [1784], "My dearest secretary . . . if only they are willing to accept My grace. The greatest sinners would achieve great sanctity, if only they would trust in My mercy. My delight is to act in a human soul and fill it with My mercy . . . write my secretary that I myself as the spiritual guide of souls – will guide them indirectly through a priest . . . and lead each one . . . by a road known by Me alone."

I am always intrigued how Joel Osteen is able to fill a basketball arena, twice every Sunday with forty thousand people. You may recall Divine Mercy Sunday last year. God's April showers always bring May flowers. It was rainy and raw. Twenty thousand were at St. Faustina's shrine about to celebrate The Feast of Divine Mercy. It was televised live. Whoa! The Catholics can pack them in too I thought. What would the crowd be like if the weather was beautiful? A shrine? St. Faustina had to be special.

To think I used to think I was in charge. St. Faustina clearly was running this deal for Jesus.

For the next few days, I read all I could find. It was good and plenty. Jesus tells St. Faustina [699], "if you receive communion on Divine Mercy Sunday and go to confession, your soul becomes like it was at baptism." It didn't define before or after, just that you needed to go to confession. I attended Mass and received communion the following day and the day after. When Jesus entered my lips on that second day a very powerful feeling came into my heart not to communicate until I made a confession before

a priest. It had been more than thirty-five years. I was ready. Pride was leaving. Humility was entering.

I probably knew more than one hundred priests from my fundraising days with Bishop Ahern. Who would I call? It wasn't for me to decide. The phone dialed itself and a Fr. John O'Hara, whom I had never met, got on. (Later, I learned Fr. O'Hara was from one of St. Therese's first North American parishes). He was filled with childlike giddiness and joy. He welcomed me home and told me not to worry. He would see me at 3:00, the Mercy Hour, when Jesus never says no. Jesus tells St. Faustina [145], "I will answer you through (the priest's) mouth. Be at peace."

Jesus tells St. Faustina [50], "I desire that priests proclaim this great mercy of Mine towards souls of sinners. Let the sinner be not afraid to approach Me. The flames of mercy are burning Me – clamoring to be spent; I want to pour them out upon these souls."

Dr. Traflet remarked at my first interview that I was truly born again. In (Luke 15:24) Jesus tells us in the parable of the Prodigal Son, "this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found." Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come." (Isn't it always remarkable when passages show up as readings on the same day you are preparing your presentation?) What a year it has been. My wife received a brand new husband; one who is calm, cool and collected. Everyone else has received a new Billy.

Three o'clock is the hour He died for our sins and the "*Chaplet of Divine Mercy*" is prayed for the conversion of sinners. Jesus dictated this prayer to His secretary Faustina [475]. The genius of God - with twenty four time zones, there is always a three o'clock somewhere in the world.

Dr. Robert Stackpole states that, "our Church is a Hospital for sinners." Jesus is our Divine Physician. His medical creed is John 3:16. Deacon Peter also read this passage in our last class. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish, but have eternal life. What happened to me is answered in the next verse, "For God did not send into the world His son to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."

"And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation," Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:18. "Jesus has a remedy for everything," St. Faustina writes [447]. He dispenses Holy Communion daily. I especially enjoy (as St. Faustina did) sitting before our Lord in Adoration. Fr. George Kosicki calls it "*Radiation Therapy*." Did you ever try doing your homework while sitting with Him? You should try it. He dictates and you write. Other times, He just plants seeds on your soul. What a place!

Joy? Here is what Fr. Andrasz advised St Faustina [55], “Act in such a way that all those who come in contact with you will go away joyful. Sow happiness about you because you have received much from God; give, then, generously to others. They should take leave of you with their hearts filled with joy, even if they have no more than touched the hem of your garment. Keep well in mind the words I am telling you right now.”

Finally, let me share with you what I have learned about hope. I still cherish the memory of an all day conference I attended in early February on St. Faustina. For me, it was profound; I listen to the tape over and over. It outdoes any new age thinker. This is from Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, vice postulator for St. Faustina’s canonization.

“Hope is not wishful thinking. Trust springs from faith and strengthens hope and love. The theological virtues unite with the moral virtues and become supernatural when we practice them trusting in God. Trust is the expectation of someone’s help – God’s. Trust is an essential condition of the virtue of hope. Hope knows that there is something established for us, it exists and we can have it. We don’t have to work for it, we don’t have to bargain for it, we can’t pay for it, it is there waiting for us. All we have to do is to allow acceptance of what it is that is there for us. It is like millions left in the bank. If we don’t draw it out, it will do us no good. What is it? It is our salvation. Our Lord Jesus Christ has won it for us and it is there for every single last one of us. How do we withdraw that which is up there? That magnificent body of good, given to us by God is gained by trusting and is called Hope.”

Scholars work day and night on stuff like this because St. Faustina listened to Jesus. She obeyed the Will of God.

Faustina and Jesus - Perfect Together.