

# THE ORIGINS OF THE CHAPLET OF MERCY

## THIS PRAYER WILL SERVE TO APPEASE MY WRATH

The Chaplet of Mercy is a prayer that Jesus dictated to Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, a young Polish mystic, in the 1930's. He directed this humble nun to pray it unceasingly and to encourage others to do the same, attaching to its prayerful recitation a myriad of extraordinary promises.<sup>1</sup>

The Chaplet is prayed utilizing the beads of an ordinary rosary and may be recited in about ten minutes, or sung using various melodies in about twenty.<sup>2</sup> With the permission of her spiritual director and Mother Superior the sisters and young women they nurtured in the convent began to recite the Chaplet as the Lord had requested.

Instructions on how to pray this prayer were included on the back of Divine Mercy holy cards printed under the direction of St. Faustina's spiritual director Blessed Fr. Michael Sopocho and they began to be distributed to the delight of the young nun. Since her death in 1938, knowledge of and devotion to the Chaplet has spread throughout the world. Thousands upon thousands attest to its power which has assuredly contributed to the consensus that the recitation or singing of the Chaplet of Mercy has become one of the most popular pious practices in the Church today.

Yet, despite its efficaciousness and popularity, many are not aware of the circumstances in which St. Faustina received this prayer and thus its significance for current generations. Many are unaware that the Lord originally requested this prayer, in which we offer the Heavenly Father the Body and Blood of Jesus, be recited as a means to appease God's wrath, especially for the sacrifice of the body and blood of the unborn child in the womb.

Early in her *Diary*<sup>3</sup>, St. Faustina recorded that the Lord instructed her to offer herself, together with Him, to God the Father repeating words similar to those that He would later dictate as the Chaplet of Mercy. This was to be done to atone for sins being committed in "the most beautiful city" in Poland and to avert a chastisement due there for these sins.

*Diary* entry 39 reads as follows:

One day Jesus told me that He would cause a chastisement to fall upon the most beautiful city in our country. This chastisement would be that with which God had punished Sodom and Gomorrah. I saw the great wrath of God and a shudder pierced my heart. I prayed in silence. After a moment Jesus said to me, **My child, unite yourself closely to Me during the Sacrifice and offer My Blood and My Wounds to My Father in expiation for the sins of that city. Repeat this without interruption throughout the entire Holy Mass. Do this for seven days.** (bold indicates the words of Jesus)

Upon obediently fulfilling this request, Jesus appeared again, and in response to St. Faustina's entreaties blessed the city and country. The *Diary* entry continues:

On the seventh day I saw Jesus in a bright cloud and began to beg Him to look upon the city and upon our whole country. Jesus looked down graciously. When I saw the kindness of Jesus, I began to beg His blessing. Immediately Jesus said, For your sake I bless the entire country. And He made a big sign of the cross over our country. Seeing the goodness of God, a great joy filled my soul.

## ST. FAUSTINA RECEIVES THE CHAPLET OF MERCY

Friday, September 13, 1935

A little later in the *Diary*, about one quarter of the way through, St. Faustina records another harrowing experience and a vision of destruction that is about to strike the world, and in particular a certain place. Her prayers were powerless until she heard and prayed the words we now recite in the Chaplet of Mercy:

In the evening, when I was in my cell, I saw an Angel, the executor of divine wrath. He was clothed in a dazzling robe, his face gloriously bright, a cloud beneath his feet. From the cloud, bolts of thunder and flashes of lightning were springing into his hands; and from his hand they were going forth, and only then were they striking the earth. When I saw this sign of divine wrath which was about to strike the earth, *and in particular a certain place*, which for good reasons I cannot name, I began to implore the Angel to hold off for a few moments, and the world would do penance. But my plea was a mere nothing in the face of the divine anger. (474, italics added for emphasis)

It is at this time that St. Faustina encounters the Holy Trinity and the “greatness of Its majesty.” She begins to plead with God in words heard interiorly. The saint continues:

As I was praying in this manner, I saw the Angel’s helplessness: *he could not carry out the just punishment which was rightly due for sins*. Never before had I prayed with such inner power as I did then. (italics added for emphasis)

The words with which I entreated God are these: **Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ for our sins and those of the whole world; for the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us.** (475)

In both cases St. Faustina mentions the wrath of God and destruction that would be unleashed upon the world for its sinfulness, and in particular upon a certain city. Prophecy of a chastisement likened to Sodom and Gomorrah caught the attention of St. Faustina’s spiritual director, Blessed Fr. Michael Sopocko. He questioned St. Faustina carefully about it and recorded her response in his *Summarium*:

She wrote in her diary that Jesus Himself said that He was about to destroy one of the most beautiful cities of our country like Sodom was destroyed on account of the crimes perpetrated there. Having read about these things in the *Diary* I asked her what does the prophecy mean? She answered confirming what she wrote and replying to a further question of mine, on account of what kind of sins God was going to inflict these punishments. She answered: especially for the killing of infants not yet born, the most grievous crime of all.

## THE MOST GRIEVOUS CRIME OF ALL

Already this crime against unborn children and women was growing, seeping in from the Soviet Union, which in 1920 became the first country in the world to legalize abortion.<sup>4</sup> Available upon request and often for no cost, by the mid-1920s hospitals there were so severely congested by abortion procedures that special clinics had to be opened to free up beds and many doctors began to become concerned.

Abortion was banned in Poland without exceptions until 1932. In that year restrictions were loosened, and the new Penal Code now legalized abortion when there were medical reasons and, for the first time in Europe, when the pregnancy resulted from a criminal act.<sup>5</sup> Warsaw, the cosmopolitan capital of Poland now comes to be known as “the place to go” if one “needs” an abortion with reports that as much as one out of every three pregnancies was terminated there between the two world wars.

Toward the end of 1937, less than 12 months before her death, St. Faustina again mentions God's anger with her country, recording in *Diary* entry 1533:

I saw the anger of God hanging heavy over Poland. And now I see that if God were to visit our country with the greatest chastisements, that would still be great mercy because, for such grave transgressions, He could punish us with eternal annihilation. I was paralyzed with fear when the Lord lifted the veil a little for me. Now I see clearly that chosen souls keep the world in existence to fulfill the measure of justice.

### CHOSEN SOULS

This particular "chosen soul" Sister Maria Faustina Kowalska died on October 5, 1938. Within one year Poland was invaded and divided down the middle between Nazi Germany and Communist Russia. Toward the end of the war, Warsaw, the beautiful capital city of Poland, filled with architectural splendors from the late 17th and 18th centuries, was systematically destroyed by Nazi bomb crews, leveling 85% of all buildings including 90% of its monuments.

Gripped in Communism, Poland's abortion regulations continued to be liberalized until available on request in the 1960s and 1970s during which time over 200,000 abortions were performed each year. Remarkably, beloved homeland son Cardinal Karol Wojtyla is elected pope in 1978. During the 1980s the abortion rate drops almost in half and continues to rapidly decline for the next several years. In 1989 Poland becomes the first Warsaw Pact country to break free of Soviet domination and in 1993 abortion on demand is outlawed by a peoples referendum. By the year 2000, only 138 abortions are performed and 2011 statistics now show Poland to be one of the most pro-life countries in the world with 76% of Poles aged 15–24 favoring a total ban on abortion.<sup>6</sup>

### APPEASING GOD'S WRATH

And so we learn that there is a strong link between the Chaplet of Mercy and the sin of abortion. We learn that the Chaplet is a powerful prayer, appeasing the just anger of God. And when we look at the long history of Poland and the extraordinary events of recent years it is obvious that God can turn utterly dark situations into experiences of hope.

Very near the end of her life St. Faustina writes:

As I was praying for Poland, I heard the words: **I bear a special love for Poland, and if she will be obedient to My will, I will exalt her in might and holiness. From her will come forth the spark that will prepare the world for My final coming.** (1732)

### INSTRUCTION FROM JESUS - HOW TO PRAY THE CHAPLET

Saturday, September 14, 1935 - Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross:

The next morning, when I entered chapel, I heard these words interiorly: **Every time you enter the chapel, immediately recite the prayer which I taught you yesterday.** When I had said the prayer, in my soul I heard these words: This prayer will serve to appease My wrath.

**You will recite it for nine days, on the beads of the rosary, in the following manner: First of all, you will say one OUR FATHER and HAIL MARY and the I BELIEVE IN GOD. Then on the OUR FATHER beads you will say the following words: "Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world."**

**On the HAIL MARY beads you will say the following words: “For the sake of His sorrowful Passion have mercy on us and on the whole world.”**

**In conclusion, three times you will recite these words: “Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.” (476)**

#### THE SPARK FROM POLAND

A spark has many facets. This ‘spark from Poland’, the Chaplet of Mercy, has been called the *antidote for abortion*<sup>7</sup> and indeed for all the ills of the world. As it continues to spread in popularity and understanding may it enkindle in all hearts the fire of God’s love for each and every soul especially the baby in the womb. May it ignite a flame that exposes all evil and lights the way to the ocean of mercy and eternal life with God.

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<sup>1</sup> Visit: [divinemeracyforamerica.org/action-plan/utilize-the-promises/promises-of-the-chaplet/](http://divinemeracyforamerica.org/action-plan/utilize-the-promises/promises-of-the-chaplet/)

<sup>2</sup> Visit: [divinemeracyforamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/How-to-Recite-the-Chaplet1.pdf](http://divinemeracyforamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/How-to-Recite-the-Chaplet1.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> All references to Diary: Diary of St. Maria Faustina Kowalska: Divine Mercy in My Soul © 1987 Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M, Stockbridge, MA 01263. All rights reserved. [www.marian.org](http://www.marian.org)

<sup>4</sup> Visit: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abortion\\_in\\_Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abortion_in_Russia)

<sup>5</sup> Visit: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abortion\\_in\\_Poland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abortion_in_Poland)

<sup>6</sup> Visit: [thenewamerican.com/world-news/europe/item/8837-polish-abortion-ban-defeated-pro-life-leaders-optimistic](http://thenewamerican.com/world-news/europe/item/8837-polish-abortion-ban-defeated-pro-life-leaders-optimistic)

<sup>7</sup> A common expression in the seminars given by Father Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, vice postulator for the cause of canonization of St. Faustina and world renown authority on Divine Mercy.

View this article online at <http://divinemeracyforamerica.org/action-plan/utilize-the-promises/promises-of-the-chaplet/origins-chaplet/>

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