



*Saint Maria
Faustina*

The Story of St. Faustina

Saint Maria Faustina was born in a village in Poland on August 25, 1905. Her birth name was Helena Kowalska. Her family was poor but prayerful. As a child Helena loved to attend Mass. She was kind to others and very helpful. She loved Jesus and she wanted to be a saint.

As Helena grew older, she felt God calling her to become a nun. She tried to ignore the call because her parents did not want her to do this. Jesus waited patiently. One evening, while at a dance, Helena saw an astonishing sight. Jesus appeared to her covered in wounds and very sad. He asked her, “How long will you put Me off?” Helena ran to a nearby cathedral to pray. She threw herself before the tabernacle and said, “Oh my Jesus, forgive me for neglecting You! Please tell me what You want me to do!”

Jesus responded, “Go at once to Warsaw [Poland]; you will enter a convent there.” The next morning Helena left her home and took a train to Warsaw. Over time she looked for a convent but was turned away again and again. Finally she was welcomed by the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. There she became Sister Maria Faustina, a bride of Christ. While in the convent Sister Faustina had many opportunities to show mercy to others. Our Lord appeared to her many times because He was pleased with her compassion and obedience.

On February 22, 1933, after returning from prayer, something amazing happened to Sister Faustina. She received a profound vision that would forever change her life and the lives of many. Jesus appeared to her wearing a dazzling white robe. One hand was raised in blessing and the other was touching His garment at the breast. Two large rays of light, one red the other pale white, were coming from His heart.

After a while Jesus said, “Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature, “Jesus, I trust in You.” Jesus promised, “Anyone who venerates this image will someday join me in heaven. I desire that there be a Feast of Mercy. I want this image to be solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter; that Sunday is to be the Feast of Mercy.” This was the start of an important mission for St. Faustina.

Sister Faustina’s spiritual director asked an artist to paint the image. It was hard to capture the beauty of Jesus. Since Sister Faustina received the wonderful grace of seeing Jesus many times during her life, her spiritual director asked her to keep a record in a diary.

Jesus taught Sister Faustina the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, a special prayer using rosary beads. He told her, “Whoever recites this prayer and marks the hour of My death in even the smallest way will receive more graces than his soul could ever need.” Sister Faustina died on October 5, 1938.

On April 30, 2000, Sister Faustina, was canonized, or proclaimed a saint, by Pope John Paul II. He also established the Second Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday, just as Jesus had requested. Saint Faustina is known as the Missionary of Divine Mercy.