



APRIL
2022

Stella Maris

SUPPORTING SEAFARERS AND FISHERS AROUND THE WORLD

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Stella Maris is a Catholic charity supporting seafarers worldwide.

We provide practical and pastoral care to all seafarers, regardless of nationality, belief or race. Our port chaplains and volunteer ship visitors welcome seafarers, offer welfare services and advice, practical help, care and friendship.

Stella Maris is the largest ship visiting network in the world, working in 332 ports with 227 port chaplains around the world. We also run 53 seafarers' centres all over the world.

We are only able to continue our work through the generous donations of our supporters and volunteers.

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Stella Maris
provides seafarers
with practical
support, information
and a listening ear

The Port of Cape Town is as rich as its history. Located in the southwestern part of South Africa, it is a strategic port to sail to South and North America, Europe, and Asia. The Port of Cape Town serves as a jumping board to thousands of merchant's vessels navigating around the globe and hundreds of distant-water fishing vessels in the rich fishing grounds of the Atlantic, Indian and Antarctic oceans.

The earliest ministry in the Port of Cape Town to seafarers dates back to 1854. The Cape Town Sailor's Home was established on 28 October 1854 when Lady Angela Coutts had witnessed the pitiful plight of distressed seafarers stranded in Cape Town. She raised funds in England for the said home with Prince Alfred, the second son of Queen Victoria, who laid the foundation stone on 18 September 1860. Cape Town Sailor's Home stood for 66 years and recorded a high of 42,750 seafarers who visited the Home and 40,000 meals served in one year alone until it was demolished in 1926. A new home was erected in a different location and demolished again in 1971. The Cape Town Sailor's Home was a "Home Away From Home" that welcomed hundreds of thousands of seafarers benefitting from its charitable service for 139 years.

With this background, **Stella Maris**, previously known as **Apostleship of the Sea**, which was founded in 1920 came into the picture. Stella Maris was established in the Port of Cape between 1923-1925 by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate Missionaries (OMI) to carry out the Catholic ethos of pastoral ministry to the People of the Sea. Later on, the ministry was taken over by diocesan priests. In 1972 Stella Maris began to work with Mission to Seafarers (MtS) in an ecumenical spirit to continue offering a home away from home to international seafarers. In 1994, the Seafarers' Centre moved to a new location inside the port. In 1996, the Scalabrini Fathers took over this ministry on invitation from the Archbishop of Cape Town. The Seafarers' Centre had shops, bars, sports equipment, entertainment rooms, free Wi-Fi, chapel, offices, and



boardroom for the People of the Sea to enjoy their stay in port. The best service the Seafarers' Centre offered was a free Wi-Fi connection. It was a point of attraction for seafarers and fishers to visit the Centre to contact their loved ones at home. It was open Sunday to Saturday from 9h30-21h30, even on most holidays. There was a regular anticipated Mass for the Catholic seafarers and fishers on Saturdays at 19h30. Unfortunately, Seafarers' Centre was permanently closed on 30 April 2021.

In spite of its closure, Stella Maris Cape Town members continue to minister to the People of the Sea. Fr Rico Almedilla Talisic CS, a Scalabrini Father, is the current Port Chaplain since 1st February 2021. Under his leadership and supported by Fr Gerardo Garcia CS (trustee member) and four hospital and ship visitors namely Ms Astrid Castenfelt, Mr Anthony Erispe, Mr Gerard Assam, and Mr Mario Assam, Stella Maris Cape Town has delivered free services to the People of the Sea in the ships, hospitals and hotels, such as (a) transportation to and from the ship, (b) liturgical/spiritual services, (c) distribution of reading material, religious articles, toiletries, and PPE, (d) free Wi-Fi connection, (e) clothing, (f) socialization and sports, (g) labour-related assistance, and (h) medical assistance. In the past three years, Stella Maris Cape Town has dramatically increased its output. Various programmes and projects were carried out for two consecutive years in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021,

even amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Through the programmes and projects, we have assisted 1,728 (in 2020) and 3,427 (in 2021) seafarers and fishers. With the difficult situation posed by Covid-19, it has gone through adaptation and innovation of its pastoral ministry to cater for the various needs of seafarers and fishers, be it spiritual, material, practical, and labour needs.

As Port Chaplain, Fr Talisic is ministering in a special network with other Scalabrini Fathers who are Port Chaplains in the ports of Manila, Kaohsiung, Taipei, Tokyo, Montevideo, Santos, Rio, Africa, and Ravenna, as well as in a network with Stella Maris chaplains in 339 ports around the world.

For seafarers and fishers, "Since the Seafarers' Centre has closed, we are the ones to come and visit you onboard ships, hospitals, and hotels. We hope you welcome us when we visit." We hope to open a new Seafarers' Centre soon and when that time comes, you will always be welcome. Consider Stella Maris Cape Town as your "home away from home."

Stella Maris Cape Town Port Chaplain

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Sunday at Sea with Colum Kelly

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT
SUNDAY 3RD APRIL

GOSPEL JOHN 8:1-11

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At daybreak he appeared in the Temple again; and as all the people came to him, he sat down and began to teach them.

The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman along who had been caught committing adultery; and making her stand there in full view of everybody, they said to Jesus, 'Master, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery, and Moses has ordered us in the Law to condemn women like this to death by stoning. What have you to say?' They asked him this as a test, looking for something to use against him. But Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with his finger. As they persisted with their question, he looked up and said, 'If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.' Then he bent down and wrote on the ground again. When they heard this they went away one by one, beginning with the eldest, until Jesus was left alone with the woman, who remained standing there. He looked up and said, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' 'No one, sir,' she replied. 'Neither do I condemn you,' said Jesus 'go away, and don't sin any more.'

THE GOSPEL AND YOU

I am a Ukrainian seafarer. My name is Fedir, a name which means "gift from heaven." I've just finished a six hour shift in my job as wiper and am sat on a pile of ropes on deck.

My job doesn't rate very highly in crew rankings but it is important and if I continue to do it well I will climb the ranks. I'd like to tell you where I am but I don't know where we are. All around is the vastness of the ocean. A chaplain once told me the vastness of the sea represents the enormity of God's love for me.

I like that. Imagine God really loves me that much.

As I sit here I am reading today's gospel, the very same one my family will have heard at Mass back home. It's a very well known story about a woman they had caught in adultery. Three phrases show the Pharisees' control over this lady:

"They caught her." "They brought her." "They made her stand before them all."

They were full of righteous indignation as they asked Jesus for his view. In their eyes, her fate is sealed: it must be death by stoning, according to the law. I notice no one mentions the adulterous man involved; the woman gets condemned and the man walks free. She doesn't even get a chance to defend herself; it is so one sided.

Jesus's words are not of condemnation.

His words are of truth, justice and compassion

"Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her".

I know I certainly wouldn't want to cast the first or any stone. God has forgiven so many things in my life. How can I condemn others. Any yet I do on this ship and in my home. It is easy to condemn but not so easy to forgive in the way that Jesus does in this story.

Like the woman in danger, we need to admit our own wrongdoings and pray for mercy rather than condemn others. Then like the woman in the story we can feel the vastness of God's love.

PALM SUNDAY

SUNDAY 10TH APRIL

GOSPEL LUKE 23:1-49

The whole assembly brought him before Pilate.

They began their accusation by saying, 'We found this man inciting our people to revolt, opposing payment of the tribute to Caesar, and claiming to be Christ, a king'. Pilate put to him this question, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' 'It is you who say it' he replied. Pilate then said to the chief priests and the crowd, 'I find no case against this man'. But they persisted, 'He is inflaming the people with his teaching all over Judaea; it has come all the way from Galilee, where he started, down to here'. When Pilate heard this, he asked if the man were a Galilean; and finding that he came under Herod's jurisdiction he passed him over to Herod who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

Herod was delighted to see Jesus; he had heard about him and had been wanting for a long time to set eyes on him; moreover, he was hoping to see some miracle worked by him. So he questioned him at some length; but without getting any reply. Meanwhile the chief priests and the scribes were there, violently pressing their accusations. Then Herod, together with his guards, treated him with contempt and made fun of him; he put a rich cloak on him and sent him back to Pilate. And though Herod and Pilate had been enemies before, they were reconciled that same day.

Pilate then summoned the chief priests and the leading men and the people. 'You brought this man before me' he said 'as a political agitator. Now I have gone into the

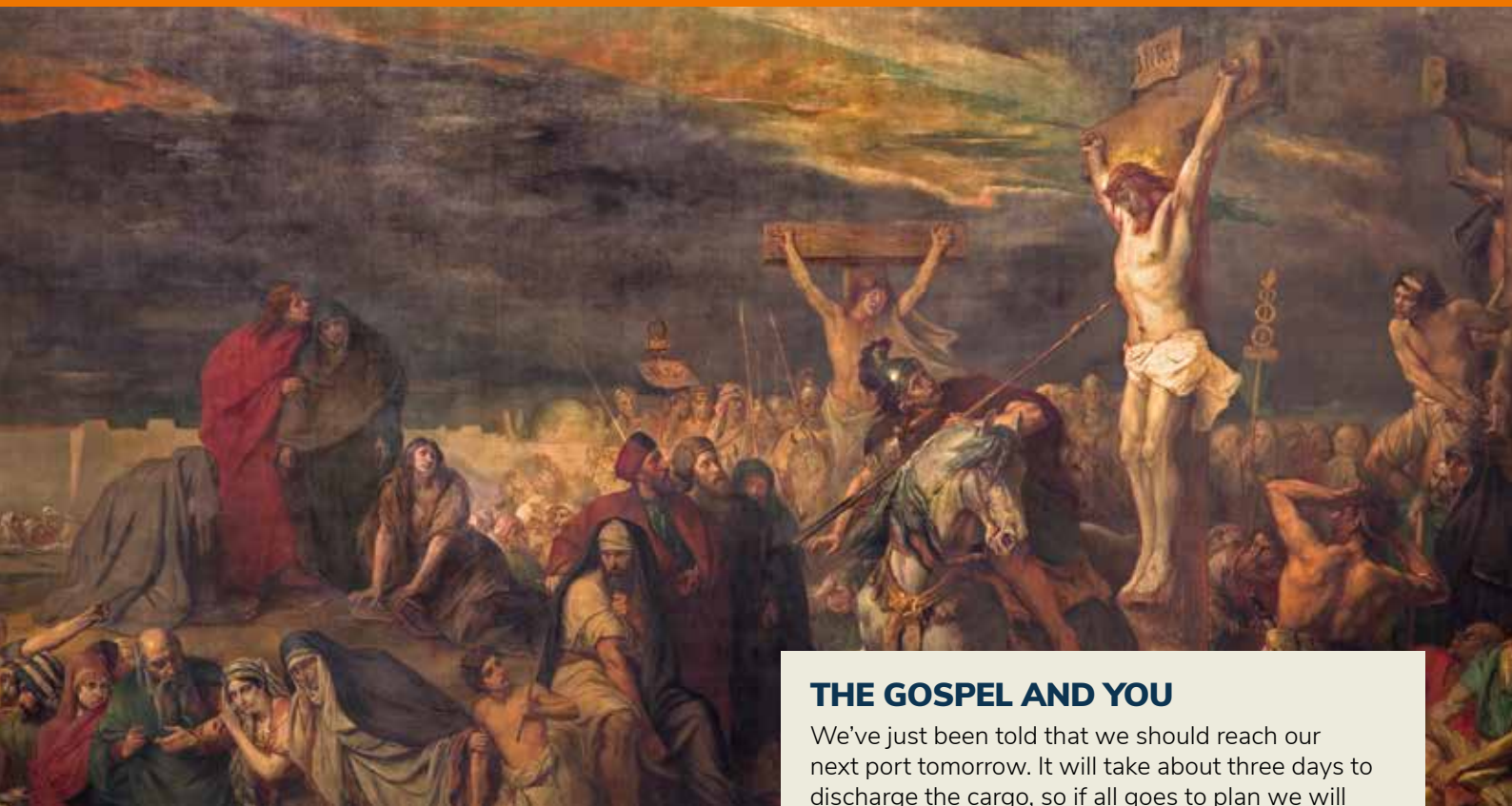
matter myself in your presence and found no case against the man in respect of all the charges you bring against him. Nor has Herod either, since he has sent him back to us. As you can see, the man has done nothing that deserves death, so I shall have him flogged and then let him go.' But as one man they howled, 'Away with him! Give us Barabbas!' (This man had been thrown into prison for causing a riot in the city and for murder.)

Pilate was anxious to set Jesus free and addressed them again, but they shouted back, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' And for the third time he spoke to them, 'Why? What harm has this man done? I have found no case against him that deserves death, so I shall have him punished and then let him go'. But they kept on shouting at the top of their voices, demanding that he should be crucified. And their shouts were growing louder.

Pilate then gave his verdict: their demand was to be granted. He released the man they asked for, who had been imprisoned for rioting and murder, and handed Jesus over to them to deal with as they pleased.

As they were leading him away they seized on a man, Simon from Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and made him shoulder the cross and carry it behind Jesus. Large numbers of people followed him, and of women too, who mourned and lamented for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children. For the days will surely come when people will say, "Happy are those who are barren, the wombs that have never borne, the breasts that have never suckled!" Then they will begin to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!"; to the hills, "Cover us!" For if men use the green wood like this, what will happen when it is dry?' Now with him they were also leading out two other





criminals to be executed.

When they reached the place called The Skull, they crucified him there and the two criminals also, one on the right, the other on the left. Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing'. Then they cast lots to share out his clothing.

The people stayed there watching him. As for the leaders, they jeered at him. 'He saved others,' they said 'let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One.' The soldiers mocked him too, and when they approached to offer him vinegar they said, 'If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself'. Above him there was an inscription: 'This is the King of the Jews'.

One of the criminals hanging there abused him. 'Are you not the Christ?' he said. 'Save yourself and us as well.' But the other spoke up and rebuked him. 'Have you no fear of God at all?' he said. 'You got the same sentence as he did, but in our case we deserved it: we are paying for what we did. But this man has done nothing wrong. Jesus,' he said 'remember me when you come into your kingdom.' 'Indeed, I promise you,' he replied 'today you will be with me in paradise.'

It was now about the sixth hour and, with the sun eclipsed, a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. The veil of the Temple was torn right down the middle; and when Jesus had cried out in a loud voice, he said, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' With these words he breathed his last. When the centurion saw what had taken place, he gave praise to God and said, 'This was a great and good man'. And when all the people who had gathered for the spectacle saw what had happened, they went home beating their breasts.

All his friends stood at a distance; so also did the women who had accompanied him from Galilee, and they saw all this happen.

THE GOSPEL AND YOU

We've just been told that we should reach our next port tomorrow. It will take about three days to discharge the cargo, so if all goes to plan we will be ashore for the beginning of Holy Week. We may even have a chaplain come onboard to celebrate part of ceremonies and perhaps bring a Palm Sunday cross. I still have last years' in my cabin but it would be good to get another to remind me, yet again, of the unconditional love of God for all of us. The cross is also a reminder to me of the fickleness of the people in the story of Holy week.

In today's gospel this most holy of weeks begins with the people shouting psalms of praise to Jesus as he enters Jerusalem. It ends with the same people shouting "Crucify him". Would I have been that fickle if I had been there? I probably would. Fickle Fedir they would call me.

What has the Passion story to do with us? It is the story of our lives. There isn't a part in the whole script that we, you and I, wouldn't play to perfection. Peter in his pride and Peter in his fall and, hopefully, Peter in his repentance too. We'd fit in perfectly with the disciples who fled at the first sign of danger, or with Pilate in his abuse of authority, or with the mob with its thirst for excitement and blood. And Judas? Let's face it, there's a bit of Judas in all of us. There are times and situations in all our lives when Jesus could easily say to us as he said to Judas, "Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

I think of the loneliness of Jesus in the Gospel this Holy Week, when even his friends begin to desert him. Hearts of love turning into hearts of stone.

I hope to welcome a Stella Maris chaplain to our ship. Maybe we will be able to celebrate Mass this week or at least share a word about this wonderful Gospel.

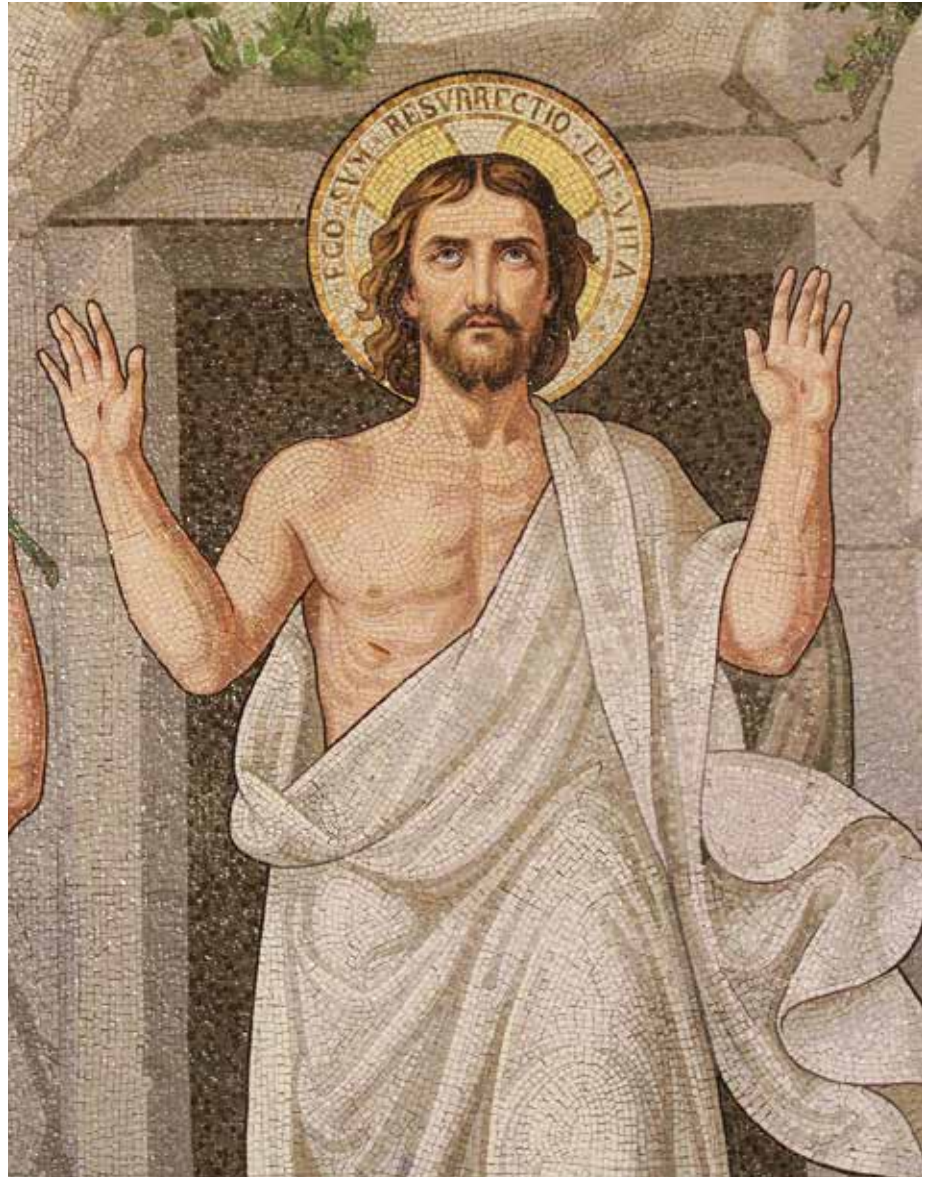
It reminds us, even in the lonely and isolated oceans, of the astonishing love of God for us.

EASTER SUNDAY SUNDAY 17TH APRIL

GOSPEL JOHN 20:1-9

It was very early on the first day of the week and still dark, when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been moved away from the tomb and came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved. 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb' she said 'and we don't know where they have put him.'

So Peter set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb. They ran together, but the other disciple, running faster than Peter, reached the tomb first; he bent down and saw the linen cloths lying on the ground, but did not go in. Simon Peter who was following now came up, went right into the tomb, saw the linen cloths on the ground, and also the cloth that had been over his head; this was not with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and he believed. Till this moment they had failed to understand the teaching of scripture, that he must rise from the dead.



THE GOSPEL AND YOU

I cannot sit outside to reflect on the wonderful Gospel of this Easter Day for we are having a rough voyage in very stormy conditions. I retreat to my little cabin to quietly reflect this great mystery.

St John tells us Mary Magdalene found the empty tomb and at first thought someone had disturbed tomb and had taken the body of Jesus away. She ran to the apostles to tell them her astonishing news.

On Easter morning, the stone was rolled away from the mouth of the tomb. Sometimes I think of my heart as a tomb awaiting a resurrection.

Is there something like a stone that is holding me back from enjoying the wonderful life God has given me? It could be an addiction, a compulsion or some hidden and dark secret that I have never shared with anyone. But as Pope Francis declares, "We are called to be people of joyful hope, not doomsday prophets!" Because of the resurrection of Jesus, we can all have hopeful joy, and go out to share it with the world.

Resurrection occurs every day, and yet we are often

reluctant to accept it.

On good days we are thankful that the stone has been rolled away from our hearts and mind; we are set free. And yet how often we drag that stone or hatch back over us and retreat inside the darkness again.

Sometimes freedom is frightening because it brings with it obligations and duty to others, and we long to be enclosed in our own little world where nothing is demanded.

Because of the resurrection of Jesus, we can all have hopeful joy, and go out to share it with the world. Jesus rose as a sign to those who love and follow him that God's divine love is stronger than death.

I will soon leave the safety of my cabin for I am on next watch. I wish the Jesus who calmed the storm could be with me. And perhaps this is one of the lessons of risen Christ. He is risen to be with us. Whatever the conditions.

"Let us rejoice and be glad."

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER SUNDAY 24TH APRIL

GOSPEL JOHN 20:19-31

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you,' and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you.

'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.'

After saying this he breathed on them and said:

'Receive the Holy Spirit.

For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.'

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, 'We have seen the Lord,' he answered, 'Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.' Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you,' he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; look, here are my

hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.' Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!'

Jesus said to him:

'You believe because you can see me.

Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.'

There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name.

THE GOSPEL AND YOU

We are nearing what will be my final port in this voyage and I am soon to return home. The Gospel is the story of Thomas "the one who doubts".

The disciples are locked away in fear and I can understand that. But it's not just a big door that locks them in but also their hearts and minds seemed closed to everything.

We can all find ourselves in the situation of those first disciples locked in their hiding place. The wounds we carry from earlier failures make us hesitate to try again. Even when someone seems full of enthusiasm and hope like Mary Magdalene, we are not convinced. The gospel reading today suggests a way out of our self. No locked doors, nor even locked hearts, can keep him out. He finds a way to enter the space where we have chosen to retreat and he empowers us to resist what is holding us back.

Just as the disciples were unmoved by the hopeful enthusiasm of Mary Magdalene who announced, "I have seen the Lord," so Thomas was unmoved by the witness of the disciples who said to him, "We have seen the Lord".

We don't have to get ourselves to some particular place in order for the Lord to engage with us. He takes himself to where we are, wherever it is a place of fear or of doubt. We might pray this Easter season for the openness to receive the Lord's coming into the concrete circumstances of our own lives, so that we too might say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God." What a lovely phrase that is. I say it every time I receive Holy Communion. We might also pray that, like the Lord, we would receive others where they are, rather than where we would like them to be.



**'Peace be with you.
'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.'** After saying this he breathed on them and said: **'Receive the Holy Spirit'.**



What is the Divine Mercy Devotion?

➤ **The message of the Divine Mercy is nothing new, just a reminder of what the Church has always taught: that God is merciful and forgiving and that we, too, must show mercy and forgiveness.**

St Faustina

Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska (1905-1938), a Polish nun, an apostle of Divine Mercy, belongs today to the group of the most popular and well known saints. Through her, Jesus communicates to the world the great message of God's mercy and reveals the pattern of Christian perfection based on trust in God and on the attitude of mercy toward one's neighbours. Jesus chose St Faustina as the Apostle and "Secretary" of His Mercy, so that she could tell the world about His great message, which she recorded in her diary titled *Divine Mercy in My Soul*. Jesus said to her: In the Old Covenant I sent prophets wielding thunderbolts to My people. Today I am sending you with My mercy to the people of the whole world. I do not want to punish aching mankind, but I desire to heal it, pressing it to My Merciful Heart. (Diary, 1588) Based on this foundation of the devotion to the Divine Mercy – which is trust in God and mercy towards others – there are other forms of this devotion, given by Jesus to St Faustina. These are: the Feast of Mercy, the Image of the Merciful Jesus, the Chaplet, the Hour of Mercy and Spreading the Devotion to the Divine Mercy.

The Image of the Merciful Jesus

Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You. ... I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over [its] enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I Myself will defend it as My own glory. (Diary 47, 48) The two rays denote Blood and Water. The pale ray stands for the Water which makes souls righteous. The red ray stands for the Blood which is the life of souls... These two rays issued forth from the very depths of My tender mercy when My agonized Heart was opened by a lance on the Cross. (Diary, 299) This image serves as a vessel for obtaining graces, and to be a sign which is to remind the world of the need to trust in God and to show mercy towards our neighbour. The words found in the signature beneath the image – 'Jesus I trust in You' – speak of an attitude of trust.

The Feast of Mercy Divine Mercy Sunday

I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of my tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of my mercy. The soul that will go to confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day all the divine floodgates through which grace flows are opened. ... It is my desire that it be solemnly celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter. Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the fount of my Mercy. (*Diary*, 699) Among all of the elements of devotion to the Divine Mercy requested by our Lord through St Faustina, the Feast of Mercy holds first place. Divine Mercy Sunday points us to the merciful love of God that lies behind the entire Paschal Mystery – the mystery of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ – made present for us in the Eucharist. By virtue of a Decree issued on 5 May 2000 by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, the Holy See proclaimed the Second Sunday of Easter also as Divine Mercy Sunday.

The Chaplet to the Divine Mercy

Whoever will recite it will receive great mercy at the hour of death. ... Priests will recommend it to sinners as their last hope of salvation. Even if there were a sinner most hardened, if he were to recite this chaplet only once, he would receive grace from my infinite mercy. ... I desire to grant unimaginable graces to those souls who trust in my mercy. (*Diary*, 687). In a vision to St Faustina, Jesus revealed a powerful prayer that he wanted everyone to say – the Chaplet to the Divine Mercy. He promised extraordinary graces to those who would recite it. Prayed on ordinary rosary beads, it may be said at any time. But our Lord specifically requested that it be used as a novena on the nine days before the Feast of Mercy on the second Sunday of Easter. It is also especially appropriate to say the Chaplet during the Hour of Mercy.

The Hour of Mercy – the Three O'clock Prayer

At three o'clock, implore my mercy, especially for sinners; and, if only for a brief moment, immerse yourself in my Passion, particularly in my abandonment at the moment of agony. This is the hour of great mercy for the whole world.

(*Diary*, 1320)

In this hour you can obtain everything for yourself and for others for the asking; it was the hour of grace for the whole world – mercy triumphed over justice.

(*Diary*, 1572)

From these instructions, it is clear that Jesus wants us to turn our attention to His Passion at the three o'clock hour to whatever degree our duties allow, and He wants us to ask for His mercy. We may not all be able to make



'Jesus, for the sake of your sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world'.

the Stations of the Cross or adore Him in the Blessed Sacrament or say the Chaplet but we always can say a short prayer such as: 'Jesus, Mercy', or 'Jesus, for the sake of your sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world'.

Spreading the Divine Mercy Devotion

Today the Lord said to me ... All those souls who will glorify my mercy and spread its worship, encouraging others to trust in my mercy, will not experience terror at the hour of death. My mercy will shield them in that final battle. (*Diary*, 1540)

By these words Jesus encourages us to spread devotion to the Divine Mercy. The foundation for the worship and apostolate of Divine Mercy is the testimony of one's own life according to the spirit of this devotion; the spirit of childlike confidence in the goodness and omnipotence of God accompanied by an active love of one's neighbour.

The Chaplet of the Divine Mercy

Begin with: Our Father, Hail Mary, Creed.

Then, on the five large beads:

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 ten small beads:

For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

Conclude with (say 3 times):

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.



THE DIVINE MERCY

You expired, Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls,
and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world.

O Fount of Life, unfathomable Divine Mercy,
envelop the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us.

Repeat three times:

O Blood and Water, which gushed forth
from the Heart of Jesus as a fountain of Mercy for us,
I trust in You!



STELLA MARIS

Stella Maris is the largest ship-visiting network in the world. We improve the lives of seafarers and fishers through our network of local chaplains and seafarer centres, expert information, advocacy, and spiritual support.



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