

2nd Easter      B      Divine Mercy Sunday      4-19-09

A famous writer once described Catholicism in three words: "Here comes everybody!" The Catholic Church really is like a big umbrella, with room for a wide variety of spiritualities. We don't all pray the same, and we don't have to.

Pope John Paul II was Polish, and he had a special devotion to the devotion of holy woman from Cracow, Poland. Her name was Sr. Maria Faustina Kowalska. She was a Sister of Mercy who lived only from 1905-1938. Sr. Faustina was very poorly educated and was given very simple tasks, but she began to experience revelations--messages from Jesus that she wrote down in notebooks.

And what were those messages that Pope John Paul found so believable and so attractive? Sr. Faustina wrote about the Divine Mercy. Diary entry #699: "My mercy is so great that no mind, be it of man or of angel, will be able to fathom it throughout all eternity."

[pause] Which is what we all hope for from God. When we have messed up, we don't want justice from Jesus; we cry out for mercy. (We very easily want justice for others.)

Mercy is what the disciples hoped for on that Easter Sunday evening in today's Gospel from St. John. On Thursday evening, after the Last Supper, they had all abandoned Jesus when he was arrested. Later, Peter had cursed: "I don't know the \_\_\_\_\_ man!" Now, three evenings later, Jesus appears to them. What would you or I have said? "You cowards! You fools! Get out of here?" No, the Risen Christ says, "Peace be with you!" That's mercy isn't it? Better

than they deserved. Better than we deserve.

Why did Pope John Paul take such an interest in the revelations to Sr. Faustina about the Divine Mercy? Did the Pope commit some serious sin in his youth? Did he then cry out for forgiveness and experience the mercy of Jesus.

All we know is this: in the year 2000, on this second Sunday of Easter, John Paul declared Sr. Faustina Kowalska, SAINT Faustina. And he decreed that every year this particular Sunday would be observed as Divine Mercy Sunday. About this second Sunday after Easter, St. Faustina had written these words from Jesus: "On that day the very depths of my tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces...Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet." Good news for St. Thomas, who committed the sin of refusing to believe.