



# Friends of the Newark Monastery Lenten Newsletter

Latest news and updates from the Friends of the Newark Monastery

*"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And he fasted forty days and forty nights..." (Matthew 4:1-2)*



## Turning Toward God

May the Lord give you His peace.

Greetings from Most Blessed Sacrament Friary! I hope this season of Lent has been a blessed time to draw nearer to the Lord in preparation for Easter. In this Jubilee Year of St. Francis, the 800<sup>th</sup>

Anniversary of his passing from this world into Heaven, I think it's appropriate to look at his perspective on penance during this season of repentance and return to the Lord.

Francis spoke frequently of penance, but for him, penance wasn't afflicting a bunch of random suffering on himself in order to be uncomfortable. Everything Francis did was intentional, and his practices of penance were intended to aid his true repentance: to turn his gaze from the world and himself toward God.



St. Francis gives us an example of a man radically in love with God. He is consumed with the desire to put God first in each moment. His prayer, his daily relationship with God, was the fuel and inspiration for every other aspect of his life. Because of his relationship with God, he was able to use the gifts God had given him to bear abundant fruit during his life, and he continues to bear fruit 800 years later. His absolute confidence in God made him always available to respond to the Lord as soon as he heard the Lord's call.

None of us is supposed to imitate St. Francis exactly, but looking at his example, let us ask ourselves some questions during this Lenten season:

1. Does the way I spend my time clearly show that my relationship with God is the most important relationship in my life?
2. Do I use the gifts God has given me to glorify him and build His kingdom? Or do I use them to glorify myself and build my own kingdom?
3. How readily do I respond to God's promptings in my life?

As we prepare for the remembrance of Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection, we can recommit to true penance: turning ourselves from this world toward God. Thank you for your continued generosity that makes our life and mission possible. Please continue to pray for us, and we will continue to pray for all of you as we draw near to Easter. May the coming resurrection fill your hearts with joy and peace befitting children of God!

Pax et Bonum,

Br. Jude Thorp

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## Divine Mercy Sunday

We're still in Lent, but it's not too soon to start thinking about how Divine Mercy ties into this season. Lent is a time of repentance and sacrifice, when we recognize our need for God's mercy. During Holy Week, we see that mercy in its most costly form—forgiveness poured out through Christ's suffering. After Christ's victory over sin and death, He invites us to fully trust in and receive His mercy on Divine Mercy Sunday.

Here's a refresher on Divine Mercy Sunday:

**St. John Paul II and Divine Mercy Sunday**



St. John Paul II established Divine Mercy Sunday to spread the message of Divine Mercy that Jesus gave to St. Faustina. After being elected Pope, St. JPII said, “I considered this message my special task. Providence has assigned it to me in the present situation of man, the Church, and the world. It could be said that precisely this situation assigned that message to me as my task before God.”

In 1993, he beatified St. Faustina on the second Sunday of Easter. In 2000, he canonized St. Faustina on the second Sunday of Easter and declared it Divine Mercy Sunday. JPII died on April 2, 2005, on the vigil of Divine Mercy Sunday, a half hour after receiving the Eucharist of the vigil Mass. Even though he died on the vigil, JPII had already prepared his Regina Caeli message for Sunday. JPII said “the world needs to understand

and accept Divine Mercy.” His final words were, “Jesus, I trust in you, have mercy on us and on the whole world.”

On Divine Mercy Sunday in 2008, Benedict XVI said in his Regina Caeli message that when JPII “closed his eyes to the world, it was precisely the eve of the Second Sunday of Easter, and many people noted the rare coincidence that combined the Marian dimension – the first Saturday of the month – and the dimension of Divine Mercy.” Commenting on coincidences, St. John Paul II once said that “in the designs of providence,” there aren’t any.

St. JPII attached a plenary indulgence to Divine Mercy Sunday, probably to encourage those who do not believe in it to still participate.

### **What did Jesus tell St. Faustina about Divine Mercy Sunday?**

St. Faustina recorded everything Jesus said to her in her diary. Jesus said:

“My daughter, tell the whole world about My inconceivable mercy. 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 flow are opened. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet. My mercy is so great that no mind, be it of man or of angel, will be able to fathom it throughout all eternity. Everything that exists has come forth from the very depths of My most tender mercy. Every soul in its relation to Me will contemplate My love and mercy throughout eternity. The Feast of Mercy emerged from My very depths of tenderness. 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.”

### **Sin, Confession & Plenary Indulgences**

The guilt of our sins is forgiven through Confession but temporal punishment for those sins remain. We still must pay for them. It’s like a son who breaks a window with a baseball. The child apologizes, and the father forgives him but the son still must fix the window. A plenary indulgence removes the temporal punishment for the sins committed. The Pope has the authority to grant

plenary indulgences as Jesus said to Peter in Matthew 16:19, “Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” This authority extends to all of Peter’s successors.

### **How is Divine Mercy Sunday Better Than a Plenary Indulgence?**

The requirements of a plenary indulgence are 1) the indulgenced act, 2) Confession, 3) Holy Communion, 4) prayer for the intentions of the Pope, and 5) complete detachment from all sin, even venial. The last requirement is what probably prevents most of us from obtaining a plenary indulgence. We need not have even the tiniest inclination toward sins of thought, words, or action. All is not lost; you’ll still get a partial indulgence if you cannot satisfy the final requirement.

The Divine Mercy promise does not have this requirement of being completely detached from all sin, even venial. God is so abundantly merciful and wants to “pour out a whole ocean of graces upon” us on Divine Mercy Sunday that the only requirements are 1) Confession (within a reasonable time before or after), 2) Holy Communion on Divine Mercy Sunday, and 3) trust in His mercy.

Jesus also said to St. Faustina, “He who refuses to pass through the door of My Mercy must pass through the door of My Justice.”

Let’s all accept the abundance of graces that He is going to pour out on us on Divine Mercy Sunday and pass through the door of His mercy.

Pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy with the CFRs here: [Chaplet of Divine Mercy](#)



### **Message from the Board**

The sole purpose of the Friends of the Newark Monastery is to maintain the building, walls and property of the friary, as well as, covering the cost of insurance and enhancements of the property. All of our funding remains entirely dependent

on the generosity of donors. As every Friar freely dispossesses himself of any personal properties or benefits, our support allows the friars to focus entirely on their apostolate and the formation of novices. Their mission of evangelization, renewal and service to the poor of the Newark area has grown to include a soup kitchen, retreat center and novice formation and education. The work done at MBS Friary truly has a global reach. The novices formed at Most Blessed Sacrament Friary are sent out across the United States and globally.

The Most Blessed Sacrament Friary was built in 1880 and is over 40,000 square feet. Maintaining a structure like this takes a lot of work. While the friars do a lot of the work that needs to be done themselves, there are many large projects which require hiring professionals at a substantial cost. We are seeking donations for continued maintenance and several upcoming projects.

You can help by using the PayPal Donation button below or by sending your donation to:

Friends of the Newark Monastery, Inc.  
Most Blessed Sacrament Friary  
P.O. Box 175  
South Orange, New Jersey 07079

The Friars continue striving to follow the spirit of St. Francis and their community's inspiring charism, which is now more important than ever. We hope and pray that God blesses you and that you can support the Friars of the Most Blessed Sacrament Friary.

We pray you have a blessed Lenten and Easter season full of renewal.

Yours in Christ,  
The Board of the Friends of the Newark Monastery



May God bless you abundantly for your continued support. Thank You!



The Friends of the Newark Monastery is a non-profit organization formed by a group of lay Catholics who, at the request of Fr. Benedict Groeschel, arranged to purchase and maintain the Most Blessed Sacrament Friary so that the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal could bring their mission of evangelization, renewal and service to the poor of the Newark, New Jersey, as well as for the formation of new friars to send into the world.

**Friends of the Newark Monastery**

PO Box 175  
South Orange, NJ 07079

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