

Saint Faustina

- Feastday: October 5
- Patron Saint of: mercy
- Birth: August 25, 1905
- Death: October 5, 1938
- Canonized: Pope John Paul II on April 30, 2000
- Suggested further reading: *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska: Divine Mercy in My Soul*



"And fear nothing, dear soul, whoever you are; the greater the sinner, the greater his right to Your mercy, O Lord."



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Saint Faustina was the third of 10 children born in Glogowiec, Poland to a poor and religious family of peasants. From a very tender age, she stood out because of her love of prayer, work, obedience, and also her sensitivity to the poor. At the age of seven, she had already felt the first stirrings of a religious vocation. After finishing school, she wanted to enter the convent, but her parents would not give her permission. At age 16, she left home and went to work as a housekeeper in Aleksandrów, Lodi, and Ostrówek in order to find the means of supporting herself and of helping her parents.

She never lost her desire for a religious vocation, and after being called during a vision of the Suffering Christ, she entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy on August 1, 1925, and took the name Sr. Maria Faustina of the Most Blessed Sacrament. She lived in the Congregation for thirteen years in several religious houses.

Externally, nothing revealed her rich mystical interior life. She zealously performed her tasks and faithfully observed the rule of religious life. She was serene and full of kindness and love for her neighbor. Although her life was apparently insignificant, monotonous, and dull, she hid within herself an extraordinary union with God.

On February 22, 1931, Faustina was visited by Jesus, who presented himself as the "King of Divine Mercy" wearing a white garment with red and pale rays coming from his heart. She writes, "Jesus said to me, 'Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the inscription: Jesus, I trust in You.'" She was asked to become the Apostle and "Secretary" of His Mercy so that she could tell the world about His great message, which Sr. Faustina recorded in a diary she titled *Divine Mercy in My Soul*.

Sister Maria Faustina, consumed by tuberculosis and by innumerable sufferings which she accepted as a voluntary sacrifice for sinners, died at age 33.