

Jesus, I Trust in You

When Jesus appeared to Faustina in the cell of her convent, he showed himself with his hand raised in blessing and red and white rays issuing from his heart. He explained to her that these rays represent the blood and water poured forth for the world when a lance pierced his agonizing heart as he was on the cross. He was very clear with Faustina that he desired for this image to be venerated throughout the world. It was, he explained, a vessel of great graces and a fountain of his mercy. All who would venerate this image would not perish; he himself would defend them at their hour of death.

Jesus instructed Faustina to mark the image with this signature: “Jesus, I Trust in You.” While several versions of the image have been created since the original one was painted in Poland, all are marked with these important words. Regardless of the actual image, each is a vehicle of God’s grace when revered with trust in his mercy.

I’ve always loved the Divine Mercy image. It is not uncommon for me to have holy cards with this image taped to my computer or stuck in the pages of my Bible. Looking at Jesus and those rays of light emitting from his heart always brings me a sense of comfort. The last words I utter in my nighttime prayers are, “Jesus I love you. Jesus, I trust in you.” For years, I said these words with contentment and confidence. Of course I loved Jesus. Of course I trusted him. What was not to trust? Soon, I would be tested though; and Jesus and Faustina helped me to have a much better understanding of what true trust is all about.

On a Hopeful Note

Faustina introduced me to God's mercy. She taught me what it means to trust God and how beautiful results happen when you do. She continues to be there for me every time life demands that I trust in Jesus (which is quite often), and I use her example of steadfast hope that God is in charge and knows what he is doing at all times.

What most impresses me is that, even in her darkest night, Faustina retained the hope that God would not abandon her. Through her I have come to see that God uses all situations in life, both good and bad, to accomplish his plans. I have also learned how hope is the strongest weapon against Satan. The evil one tempted Faustina as he tempts us with discouragement, his chief weapon, to make us less effective warriors and shut us down from doing God's work. But each time Faustina clung to God, whom she fully trusted; and Satan was rendered powerless. When I am feeling discouraged and tempted to despair, I ask Faustina for her intercession. I know that just uttering the words, "Jesus I trust in you," even when I don't genuinely feel it, can cause the devil to flee. His weapon may be discouragement, but ours is hope, and that is always the stronger weapon.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI recognized the importance of this spiritual weapon. He devoted an entire encyclical to the virtue of hope and its importance in the world today. In *Spe Savli* (Saved in Hope), he writes that to really know God, we must have hope. It is what defines us as Christians. As the Holy Father explains, those of us who believe know that our lives will not end in emptiness. We have a future. Many people in the world, however, live in darkness, without God and without hope, and this is a tragedy. For the Christian

who has hope, the future is certain and the present therefore can be lived well. Hope gives meaning and purpose to our journeys. As a result, we live our lives differently because of this hope. Hope grants us new life because it is a gift that changes the life of those who receive it. To have true hope, it is necessary first to have faith, which is the final virtue we address in this book. This virtue was taught best to me by my third spiritual journey partner, St. Bernadette Soubirous.