

# What Is the Divine Mercy Novena?

The Divine Mercy Novena is a nine-day prayer devotion based on the private revelations of Jesus to St. Faustina Kowalska, recorded in the Diary of **St. Maria Faustina Kowalska**.

Jesus instructed St. Faustina to begin the novena on Good Friday, each day offering prayers for specific groups of souls (e.g., sinners, priests, children, etc), culminating in Divine Mercy Sunday preparations. The primary prayer is the **Divine Mercy Chaplet**, supplemented by the daily intentions Jesus gave Faustina (ref: Diary, 1209–1229). It's prayed from April 18 (Good Friday) to April 26, 2025, for the upcoming feast.

## How the Novena Fosters Holiness

Holiness, in Catholic teaching, is the call to **“be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5:48)**, growing in love for God and neighbor through grace and virtue (**CCC 2013–2014**). The Divine Mercy Novena contributes to this in several ways:

- **Deepening Trust in God's Mercy:** The novena centers on Jesus' promise: **“By this novena, I will grant every possible grace to souls” (Diary, 796)**. Each day's prayer reinforces trust in God's infinite mercy, countering despair or self-reliance.
  - **Holiness Impact:** Trust is a cornerstone of faith (**CCC 1814–1816**). By praying for others (e.g., “lukewarm souls” on Day 7), you grow in humility and dependence on God, shedding pride—a key obstacle to sanctity. Example: **Day 1 prays for “all mankind, especially sinners,”** expanding your heart to universal charity, aligning with the two greatest commandments (**Matt. 22:37–40**).
- **Cultivating Contrition and Repentance:** The novena encourages reflection on sin and mercy, especially starting on Good Friday, the day of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. **The Chaplet's refrain — “For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world” — focuses on Christ's redemptive suffering**.
  - **Holiness Impact:** This fosters contrition (sorrow for sin out of love for God, **CCC 1452**), purifying your intentions. Regular contrition strengthens the will against sin, a step toward holiness.
  - **Link to Divine Mercy Sunday:** Contrition prepares you for sacramental confession (required for both the indulgence and special graces), ensuring you approach it with a repentant heart.
- **Interceding for Others:** Each day's intention targets different souls—e.g., the faithful departed (Day 8), pagans (Day 3)—uniting your prayer with Christ's redemptive mission.
  - **Holiness Impact:** Intercessory prayer grows charity, the “soul of holiness” (**CCC 826**). By praying for others' salvation, you imitate Christ's selflessness, fulfilling “love your neighbor as yourself.” **Example:** On Day 9, praying for “souls who have become lukewarm” (**Diary, 1228**) can inspire you to rekindle your own fervor, avoiding spiritual complacency.
- **Building Discipline and Prayer Habits:** Committing to nine days of the Chaplet (about 10–15 minutes daily) requires discipline, often paired with fasting or almsgiving during Easter Week.
  - **Holiness Impact:** Consistent prayer forms virtues like perseverance and piety (**CCC 1830–1832**), anchoring your spiritual life. It's a mini-retreat, reorienting you *toward* God.
  - **Link to Divine Mercy Sunday:** This habit primes you for the feast's acts (e.g., praying before the Blessed Sacrament), making them feel natural rather than rushed.

# Preparation for the Plenary Indulgence and Special Graces

Divine Mercy Sunday offers two graces: the plenary indulgence (**Apostolic Penitentiary Decree, 2002, Acta Apostolicae Sedis 94, pp. 577–578**) *and* the special graces promised to St. Faustina (**Diary, 699**). The novena directly supports both:

## • Plenary Indulgence Preparation

- Requirements:
  - Sacramental confession (within about 20 days).
  - Eucharistic Communion on Divine Mercy Sunday (*or its vigil*).
  - Prayer for the Pope's intentions (e.g., Our Father, Hail Mary).
  - Complete detachment from all sin, even venial.
  - Perform an indulgenced act, like praying the Our Father and Creed before the Blessed Sacrament or joining Divine Mercy devotions in a church.
- Novena's Role:
  - Confession Readiness: The novena's daily focus on mercy prompts examination of conscience, encouraging you to seek confession early (e.g., during Holy Week). Day 5's prayer for "heretics and schismatics" can inspire unity with the Church, reinforcing sacramental grace.
  - Detachment from Sin: While complete detachment is tough, the novena builds love for God through the Chaplet's repetition and intentions, helping you desire freedom from sin. For example, Day 4's focus on "those who do not believe in God" can stir gratitude for faith, reducing attachment to worldly distractions.
  - Prayer Practice: The novena includes the Chaplet, which can fulfill part of the indulgenced act if prayed in a church on the feast day, aligning with the decree's options.
  - Holiness Tie-In: Striving for detachment purifies your heart, a direct step toward holiness, as it aligns your will with God's (**CCC 1430–1433**).

## • Special Graces Preparation

- Requirements:
  - Be in a state of grace (via confession).
  - Receive Holy Communion worthily on Divine Mercy Sunday.
  - **Trust in God's mercy, with at least imperfect contrition (sorrow for sin due to fear of punishment or love of God).**

Promise: Jesus said, "**The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment**" (**Diary, 699**)—a renewal of baptismal grace, per theologians like Ignacy Rozycki.

- Novena's Role:
  - Trust in Mercy: **The novena's core is trust, emphasized in phrases like "Jesus, I trust in You."** Each day's intention (e.g., Day 2 for priests) builds confidence in God's mercy, meeting Jesus' call for trust over perfection.
  - Sacramental Prep: By starting on Good Friday, the novena aligns with the Triduum's grace-filled liturgies, encouraging confession and Communion. Day 6's prayer for "meek and humble souls" fosters humility,

preparing you to receive Communion worthily.

- **Baptismal Renewal:** The novena's focus on Christ's Passion (via the Chaplet) recalls baptism's link to His death and resurrection (CCC 1214–1216). Praying for "souls in purgatory" (Day 8) reminds you of mercy's power to erase punishment, mirroring the special graces' effect.
- **Holiness Tie-In:** Trusting mercy opens you to grace, transforming your soul to reflect Christ's love—a hallmark of holiness (**CCC 1709**).

## Unique Benefits for Divine Mercy Sunday - Why It's Special

The special graces, unlike other indulgences, don't require complete detachment—only trust and sacramental participation—making them uniquely accessible, like baptism's unconditional cleansing (**CCC 1263**). The plenary indulgence adds a Church-backed remission, but it's the special graces that echo baptism's "reset."

- **Novena's Edge:** While not strictly required for either grace, Jesus tied the novena to Divine Mercy Sunday, promising "every possible grace" (**Diary, 796**). It's like spiritual training, building the habits (trust, prayer, repentance) that maximize your receptivity to the feast's gifts.
- **Holiness Connection:** By praying for diverse souls, you grow in universal charity, a trait of saints. The novena's Easter Week timing roots you in Christ's victory, fueling hope and zeal for holiness.

## Practical Impact on Your Walk

- **Before the Feast:** The novena prepares you practically (e.g., scheduling confession) and spiritually (e.g., detaching from sin through prayer). For example, praying for "children" on Day 6 can remind you to guard innocence in yourself, resisting temptation.
- **On Divine Mercy Sunday:** You're ready to act—confessed, trusting, and prayerful—whether attending a parish devotion or praying privately. The novena's momentum makes Communion feel like a culmination, not a checklist.
- **After the Feast:** The habits formed (daily Chaplet, trust) can persist, sustaining your pursuit of holiness. Helping souls in purgatory (a novena focus) deepens your sense of communion with the Church, inspiring ongoing mercy.
- **Example in Action:** *Imagine* you start the novena on Good Friday, April 18, 2025. Each day, you pray the Chaplet at 3 p.m. (the Hour of Mercy), reflecting on souls like "the devout" (Day 3). You confess on Holy Saturday, plan Communion for Divine Mercy Sunday, and grow in trust. By April 27, you're detached from sin (to the best of your ability), pray with your parish, and receive both graces. This journey—repentance, charity, trust—makes you holier, more Christ-like.

The Divine Mercy Novena fosters holiness by building trust, contrition, charity, and discipline over nine days, aligning your heart with God's mercy. Starting on Good Friday, it prepares you for Divine Mercy Sunday's plenary indulgence by encouraging confession, detachment from sin, and prayerful acts, and for the special graces by deepening trust and sacramental readiness. **Like baptism's renewal, it transforms your soul, making April 27, 2025, a milestone in your walk toward sanctity.**