



When Sr Gaudia Skass, preaches God's love and mercy she radiates light from her smiling face. Born and raised in Poland, Sr Gaudia studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw before entering the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. In 2015, she completed graduate studies in journalism and is the founder of the YouTube channel Blisko Rahamim. She now lives in Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

What is the God you believe in?

Sr Gaudia: The God I believe in is a love that always surprises me, surpasses me, amazes me and constantly inspires me.

Sr Faustina's Diary is filled with passionate love for me and you. The phrase "I desire" appears approximately 70 times in her Diary. The message is that God gives himself to us fully; he offers us his own heart, first and foremost in the sacraments. In the Divine Mercy image, we see rays pouring forth from Jesus' heart. They symbolise the purifying and life-giving sacraments — most of all his merciful presence in the sacraments of baptism, confession and the Eucharist. He patiently waits for us, his hands overflowing with gifts.

In your recordings and writings, you repeatedly speak of God's desires to heal our hearts with his infinite love. How can people imagine God's sheer love?

Sr Gaudia: It not unusual for God, who is and has everything, to leave



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The Moment of Greatest Love

his comfort zone in heaven. He leaves heaven with a desire and happiness to save us.

He does not look for new fascinating experiences, no. He doesn't need this because Our Lord God has an ever-filling newness of happiness that is creative. And this God comes out of His happiness into our swamp of sin when we turn away from God where He will not only get dirty but also wounded by our sins... to the point of death. His Heart will be cut into a thousand pieces by our rejection of His love... For me, this is the

unquestionable thirst of the Lord God. He undertakes the rescue of souls for all, which He does not have to carry out at all. The salvation of souls is for us alone and not for his own personal gain. Our Lord accepts all our suffering and pays a high price so that we can have eternal life and happiness and joy with Him in paradise.

Today many people are searching elsewhere or find spirituality outside the institution of the Church. Why did God become man, why is it so important?

Sr Gaudia: For me, the most important thing in these words 'Why did God become man' is to experience how much God loves me. He, who is perfect and infinite, entered into the limitations of human flesh, so meagre, so small, and so susceptible to suffering and all that is unpleasant.

Jesus entered into this to be closer to me, simple as that. No one has done more for me than the Lord God, who became man to be closer to me so that I could touch Him, so that I could look into His eyes.... And that I might believe in the great

dignity of being human, for God himself became man.

And yet this is only the beginning...

Sr Gaudia: This is such a shocking revelation that even if the Lord God had stopped the history of salvation at this point, it would be enough to marvel at for all eternity! And God goes even further. That is why I am not surprised by what St Faustina wrote in her diary, that there would not be enough eternity for her to praise God's unfathomable mercy and compassion for her in a worthy way (cf. Diary 1486).

What I already know of the Lord God, of His great love for me, is so incredible that I can no longer comprehend it. And what will happen when I understand and discover more on the other side of life... Surely for all eternity I will wonder, praise and give thanksgiving again and again and again.

Jesus says to Sr Faustina; "Speak of My mercy". For many people, however, the word "mercy" is a purely theological concept. What does it mean to "speak of mercy"? How do we interpret this message of the Lord Jesus?

Sr Gaudia: There are two ways. The first one is mercy, Jesus is mercy incarnate, so mercy is His name and we should talk about Jesus - And the second is to talk about the deeds of God. Mercy is the love of the Lord God in deeds. People like to relate to something tangible rather than theological words which could be difficult for most people because it does not touch their hearts. Their hearts are touched by particular stories, and these can be stories from the Holy Scripture, or from Sister Faustina's "Diary", or

perhaps testimonies from their own lives. For example, visiting the lonely, helping the sick or doing a good deed.

Ideally, for every truth in which I believe, I have confirmation from my own life experience. When I speak of God's mercy, I speak of my own real experiences of God's mercy. Then a general truth can be built up from that, even a theological truth.

How do you understand Jesus saying to Sr Faustina: "I give great graces to souls who meditate devoutly on My Passion" (Diary 737). How can it help us? Some people say: "I meditate on the Passion, but it does not speak to me". What more can I do to believe in the unconditional love of God?

Sr Gaudia: It is a matter of grace. For our part we are willing and do what Jesus has commanded. He says; "Meditate" - and I do, but always with the awareness that it is God's grace, His decision, whether I feel something more deeply today, whether I understand or believe more deeply.

I hope, I ask, I humbly go to prayer and with confidence and I open the Sacred Scriptures to reflect, I pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet or I pause at 3:00 p.m. to reflect on the mercy of Jesus at the moment of his death. I do what I can and the rest is a matter of grace. I firmly believe that in every sincere prayer of the heart (no matter how short or long it is) I am drawing closer to God, to know Him and His mercy better.

But it is the Lord God who gives us a deeper understanding of His mercy; we do not always feel it and are not always fully aware of it. It is only after some time when you see that you are a different person

and your understanding is deeper. In other words, it is often only after some time that we see how grace has worked within us in secret.

So it is necessary to have not only a desire but also perseverance?

Sr Gaudia: I need to feed my desire to know God all the time. I need to feed it with time spent in prayer, meditation on the Word of God, reading mystics like St Faustina... I do it persistently, I do not get discouraged even if I do not see the results. I may not see the results for a long time, or even to the end. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, for example, lived in complete spiritual darkness for many years, yet she entered into an ever deeper understanding of the mystery of God's mercy. And she herself was increasingly transformed into mercy, but she did not see it.

Perhaps, then, for the sake of our humility, God hides from our eyes the fruits of his grace but allows others to see them?

How can we understand the words of Jesus; "If My death has not convinced you of My love, what will?" (Diary 580).

Sr Gaudia: It is an expression of God's powerlessness. It is astonishing that the Almighty God is in a sense "impotent". He limits His omnipotence to the omnipotence of love. He is as omnipotent as love allows Him to be. Love does not allow certain limits to be crossed, for example, entering without invitation into the space where only man himself can say "Come in". God, although we are shown the depths of God's love for us to the point of death on the cross, He cannot force us to accept and reciprocate His love.

Sister, when the Lord Jesus says; "If you do not believe My words, at least believe My wounds" (Diary 379), what is He calling us to? How do we understand this?

Sr Gaudia: God's mercy is reflected in the cross of Christ, a direct reflection of His love for us. It has always been clear to us that God is love, but it is a matter of experiencing it in particular actions. The greatest act of God's love is that He died for us. And it is amazing that the One, over whom death has no power, dies.

He is without sin, death cannot touch Him, and yet He enters into a fragile human nature and accepts it completely.

He is fully God and fully man so that we can say these extraordinary words, that God, the almighty, eternal God, dies, and at the hands of men! He does it for us to pay our debt. His death is the strongest expression of how much He loves us.

This is most powerfully revealed in Jesus' passion, death and in His resurrection we see God's triumph over death, pointing toward the promise of eternal life in God's presence.

The Divine Mercy devotion leads us to greater trust, as we see in the prayer on the image: "Jesus, I trust in you." Jesus's Passion is the source of our hope, which leads us to invoke the Father for his mercy. The ultimate goal of our hope is our salvation, our eternal happiness with God. The chaplet should lead us to a greater trust in the reality that Jesus has redeemed us.

St Faustina wrote; "I desire to go throughout the whole world and speak to souls about the great mercy of God. Priests, help me

in this; use the strongest words [at your disposal] to proclaim His mercy, for every word falls short of how merciful He really is" (Diary 491). Could you give an instance from the Diary?

Sr Gaudia: "You are a corpse - yet you live." This is a paraphrase of a passage from "The Diary", where Jesus says that even if there were no hope of resurrection from a human perspective, even if a person were like a corpse, God's mercy can resurrect souls in their fullness (cf. Diary, 1448).

I believe that this image of death is the most fitting because death is always the definitive end of life here on earth. According to some, it is already the complete end of everything; they do not believe in life after death, and therefore, they live in constant fear of death.

On the other hand, interestingly, when Jesus speaks about death in the Holy Scriptures, He refers to sin. That is the real death! It is a gradual spiritual dying that can lead to choosing eternity without God, in incredible loneliness, as hell is such a total, cruel solitude. However, when Jesus talks about physical death (the death of the body), He calls it a sleep. They even laugh at Him when He goes to resurrect Jairus' daughter. But Jesus says: she is only sleeping. And that is the understanding that we should have: physical death is just a sleep.

In one sentence please provide an example if I met a person – and what, as a priest, can I say to them? What would be the most powerful words?

Sr Gaudia: Each person is unique therefore for each individual

something different is needed. However, there is something we all have in common – everyone first needs to experience that the priest or anyone addressing them actually sees them, values them as a human being, takes time for them and is fully present in the moment of conversation. Everyone needs to feel important to the other. If the fundamental experience, the sense that a priest or other interlocutor wants my good is assured, then the simplest words about God's mercy can touch a heart powerfully.

What words do you use when proclaiming the truth about God's mercy?

Sr Gaudia: There are no limits to the mercy of God. Through the message of Divine Mercy, our Lord is preparing us for His final coming.

The greatest attribute is love and mercy. It unites the creature with the Creator. This immense love and abyss of mercy are made known in the Incarnation of the Word and in the Redemption [of humanity], and it is here we read that St Faustina saw this as the greatest of all God's attributes.

For me, each time the truth about God's mercy is spoken is when I interact with people. I always try to get to know the group a little before preaching.

Through the grace of God, He really provides me with an insight into how to address this or that specific group, what words will resonate with them, what they need to hear.

Sr Gaudia Skass ISMM
was interviewed
by Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA