

FAUSTINA'S 'DIVINE MERCY' IMAGE

Question / Issue:

Why do some Catholics have concerns about the Divine Mercy painting?

Answer / Resources:

There may be a number of concerns with Faustina's 'Divine Mercy' image. The following are some items that may be considered problematic with regard to the original image that Faustina had painted...

1. Faustina's 'Divine Mercy' image is decidedly untraditional
2. Faustina's 'Divine Mercy' image is oddly surrounded by darkness (it has even been called 'spooky')
3. Faustina's 'Divine Mercy' image noticeably omits the Sacred Heart

"Does it bother you that St. Jacinta of Fatima said before her death in 1920 that 'the Heart of Jesus wishes to be venerated together with the Immaculate Heart of Mary', but the image for Faustina's 1930 devotion shows neither Jesus', nor Mary's hearts?" [*What's Up With Faustina's Divine Mercy Devotion (2)? Another Approach For Getting To The Truth*] (*MyCatholicSource User-Submitted Article/Catholic Controversy Series*)
4. Unlike traditional Catholic images, Faustina's 'Divine Mercy' image contains no trace of Christ's wounds
5. On Faustina's 'Divine Mercy' image, the fingers on the right hand appear more similar to a greeting than a blessing
6. The prominent rays of light seem odd on Faustina's 'Divine Mercy' image, regardless of how they may be explained
7. The halo on Faustina's 'Divine Mercy' image seems insufficient
8. In Faustina's 'Divine Mercy' image, the lighting on the hair can appear like horns when seen from a distance...



9. Faustina's 'Divine Mercy' image is technically the 'Father Sopocko image' as Fr. Sopocko actually "dressed and posed for the painting" that is supposedly of Jesus [*For more on this, try here: <http://MyCatholicSource.com/FDMUA3>*]
10. According to online sources – including at least one site that is dedicated to supporting Faustina's devotion – the painter of Faustina's 'Divine Mercy' image, Eugeniusz Kazimirowski, was a Freemason who later painted himself as Judas Iscariot (the traitor) [*Reminder: Freemasonry is "an enemy of God, Church, and country" (Pope Leo XIII)*]
11. Faustina's 'Divine Mercy' image is *not* distinctly Catholic – it can be (*and has been*) used by Protestants
12. Faustina's 'Divine Mercy' image is associated with questionable promises and may lend itself to superstition. For example, consider these troubling quotes from Faustina's diary...

"By means of this Image[!] I shall be granting many graces to souls; so, let every soul have access to it." (#570)

"Today I saw the glory of God which flows from the image[!]." (#1789)

"I am offering people a vessel with which they are to keep coming for graces[!] to the fountain of mercy. That vessel is this image with the signature: 'Jesus, I trust in You.'" (#327)

"... and I demand[!] the worship of My mercy through the solemn celebration of the [Divine Mercy] Feast and through the veneration of the image which is painted." (#742) [*How exactly can such a thing be 'demanded'...? Even if the Church gives approval to a devotion arising from an alleged private revelation, following its dictates CANNOT be imposed on Catholics or 'demanded' of them.*] (*What's Up With Faustina's Divine Mercy Devotion (2)? Another Approach For Getting To The Truth*)

"After a while, Jesus said to me, Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You. I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel, and [then] throughout the world. I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish[!]. I also promise victory over [its] enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I Myself will defend it as My own glory." (#47-48)

As stated in "*What's Up With Faustina's Divine Mercy Devotion? Unanswered Questions & Things You May Not Know*" (emphasis added)...

"[We] know there can be NO new path to salvation and simply venerating an image will NOT save unrepentant sinners from hell! But, yet again, there is no call here to repentance.

Also, we know that God already instituted the sacraments to dispense His graces...[S]acraments give graces of themselves, whereas sacramentals [such as images] do not give graces directly. [*As stated in the Baltimore Catechism, 'The difference between the Sacraments and the sacramentals is: 1st, The Sacraments were instituted by Jesus Christ and the sacramentals were instituted by the Church; 2nd, The Sacraments give grace of themselves when we place no obstacle in the way; the sacramentals excite in us pious dispositions, by means of which we may obtain grace.'*]

"...it is good to take note of the Baltimore Catechism's instruction concerning the possibility of sinning when using sacramentals: 'Persons may sin in using Sacramentals by using them in a way or for a purpose prohibited by the Church; also by believing that the use of Sacramentals will save us in spite of our sinful lives. We must remember that Sacramentals can aid us only through the blessing the Church gives them and through the good dispositions they excite in us. **They have, therefore, no power in themselves, and to put too much confidence in their use leads to superstition.**'"

Furthermore, note that Faustina attributed an illicit baptism to graces obtained when she prayed before the image (see Faustina's diary, #916-917), and she also claimed she would have to "answer for a multitude of souls" on the day of judgment if she neglected painting the image (see Faustina's diary, #154).

It is sadly true that...

"Some Catholics may wrongly think venerating an image, praying a chaplet, or spreading the 'Divine Mercy' devotion are 'salvation shortcuts' that will be sufficient to save them without necessary amendment of their lives" [*What's Up With Faustina's Divine Mercy Devotion (2)? Another Approach For Getting To The Truth*]

13. Faustina's 'Divine Mercy' image was REJECTED by the Church before the revolutionary Second Vatican Council, along with her writings (which were NOT rejected due to translation errors!)

Before closing, let's cover a couple common objections...

1. Faustina herself was not pleased with image. This is true, however: 1) Her displeasure did not concern the issues above, but rather because the painting 'wasn't beautiful enough', and 2) Jesus supposedly told Faustina that the image was acceptable...

"The work was done for a few months and, finally, in June or July, 1934, the picture was finished. Sister Faustina complained that the image was not as beautiful as her vision but [the] Lord put her at ease saying that it was enough the way it was." (Fr. Sopocko's Memoirs Concerning Faustina) [online source]

2. The image received a blessing. This is true, however...

"[A]dherents may boast about the image being 'blessed' even before the Church initially rejected Faustina's writings & image. But how is that a 'big deal'? If anyone with a modicum of talent were to paint a picture of Jesus, would many parish priests (or even bishops) refuse to bless it? So how can a blessing be some great 'validation' of the image?" [*What's Up With Faustina's Divine Mercy Devotion (2)? Another Approach For Getting To The Truth*]

And even if the image was blessed by a Pope before Faustina's writings were rejected, this certainly does *not* constitute a 'formal approval' of Faustina's writings or any alleged promises associated with the image. Besides the fact that the image was relatively new at the time, the Church had yet to make a formal ruling on Faustina's devotion. It has also been alleged (but not definitively confirmed) that Faustina's writings were placed on the Index of Forbidden Books under the same pontificate. Even if that cannot be firmly established, it IS indisputable that her writings & her image were subsequently *rejected* by the Church, until after the revolutionary Second Vatican Council.

In closing, are Catholics really to believe that Jesus "demands(!)" that we venerate this untraditional, dark/odd, heartless, Fr. Sopocko image painted by a Freemason? If this doesn't throw up some red flags, what would?

Although it is true that later representations of the 'Divine Mercy' image may cover over/alter some disturbing items above (and various later images may also be arguably feminine), this doesn't change the fact that the original image contains many problematic issues that concern faithful Catholics, not to mention the many issues with Faustina's diary (*for some examples, see <http://MyCatholicSource.com/FDM>*). And in fact, subsequent interpretations of the 'Divine Mercy' image may be based on Faustina's original & troubling 'Divine Mercy' image.

Note: For more regarding Faustina's 'Divine Mercy' Devotion, try links at <http://MyCatholicSource.com/FDMI>