

Reflections

Volume 52

1

*International
Catholic Family Newsletter*

December 2019

If You Died Today

Cuba's Miraculous Virgin of Charity Statue

St. Faustina Catholic Mystic-Jesus Is Coming Soon

Celestial Music Found on Tilma

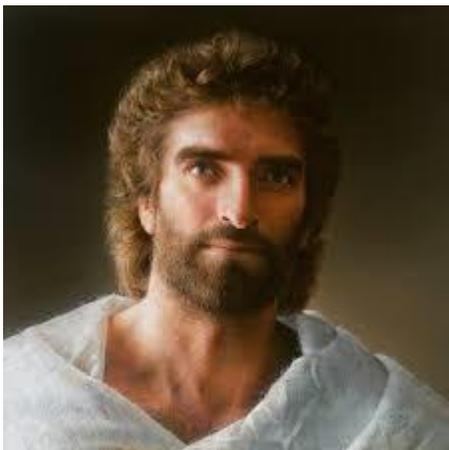
Blessings to All:

By: Richard Pickard

We all come to the same end in life...we die. It is a truth that we cannot debate. But it is in fact, an end to this life and a birth into eternal life. There have been thousands upon thousands of near-death experiences that tell the same story. Heaven exists and that God loves us unconditionally. I think God allows us to see a little window of heaven in the testimony of those who had near death experiences. One near death experience that stands out for me is that of Chrystal McVea. I ran her story in the July 2017 Newsletter.

You can see her video of her experience at:
<http://www1.cbn.com/700club/nine-minutes-heaven>. **Copy and paste to your browser.** I welcome you to view it. It has something for all of us.

How we live from our birth until our death is a journey that all of us share. This time before death, is a learning time for all of us. Like most, if not all of us, you have had good and bad times. Sickness and health. Love and anger. Disappointment and happiness. Perhaps a broken heart or a broken spirit has been a part of your life. The one constant for all of us is God's love. **God will not stop loving you!** You on the other hand, can resist God's love and shun Him. Perhaps things that have happened in your life are so bad, that you are mad at God or believe that He does not love



you anymore. Like the story of Chrystal McVea who thought God stopped loving her.

The truth of God's love for us can be seen in the life of Jesus Christ. God did not spare His only son from the good and bad in life. Jesus' love for the Father and his love for us was greater than any suffering he would endure. *Think of that for a moment.*

God came down to earth to prove his love for us. He became sin for us. He took our sins upon the cross, so that we can have eternal life in heaven. Our sins were paid for, once and for all. (1 Peter 3:18). Jesus ask us to trust in His Mercy. *That's it.* Trust in His Mercy. Call upon Him when you are troubled...when you have sinned...when you don't know where to turn. Don't leave Jesus out of your day. He gave His life for all of us.

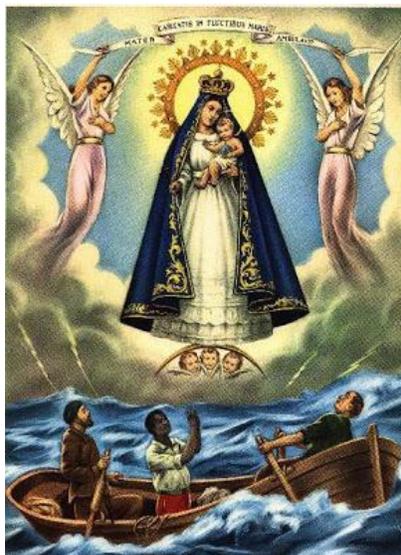
Jesus trusted in His Father in all things. Jesus knows when each of us will die. He longs to be with all of us to reassure and give us His unconditional love. In good time and in bad times. If you knew that today you would die, you could prepare. But for many of us, death comes without warning. So, today and every day, live your life trusting in Jesus. He is trustworthy. He went the extra mile for us. He died for our sins. He knows our sin history, and yet, He welcomes us with open arms. All we have to do is ask for His help. **And take the advice of Saint Padre Pio.** →

"Pray, hope, and
don't worry.
Worry is useless.
God is merciful
and will hear
your prayer."

- Saint Padre Pio



La Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre - The Virgin of Charity



The Virgin of Charity (La Virgen de la Caridad) is a miraculous statue of the Virgin Mary in the mining town of El Cobre, outside Santiago in southwest Cuba. Her shrine is the most important religious site on the entire island.

A focus of intense popular devotion—not just for Catholics but even those who aren't otherwise religious—the beloved Virgin of Charity was declared the patron saint of Cuba by the pope in 1916.

History of the Statue

The town of El Cobre was founded in 1550 as a Spanish copper mine, worked by slaves and Indians. One day in 1608, two Indians and a slave boy were gathering salt on the coast near El Cobre when they saw something floating in the water. It was a small statue of the Virgin Mary, carrying the Christ child and a gold cross. She floated on a board bearing the inscription, Yo soy la Virgen de la Caridad, "I am the Virgin of Charity."

At the time, the church in El Cobre was dedicated to Santiago, St. James, the powerful patron of the Spanish conquest. So, the statue of the Virgin was placed in a thatched hut instead of in the church. But on three successive nights, the statue disappeared from the hut and was found on top of the hill above El Cobre.



[The Catholic Church today in Cuba is governed by the Cuban Bishops Conference. There are over six million Catholics - around 60.5% of the total population.]

Statue of the Virgin of Charity in the El Cobre Basilica, Santiago, Cuba

The Virgin of Charity resided in several small shrines until 1630, when the copper mine was closed, and the slaves were freed. She then took St. James' place above the high altar in the church, a symbol of the triumph of the people over the Spanish conquerors.

Since then, the Virgin has continued to assist her people and has been credited with countless miracles. In 1731, when an attempt was made to reintroduce slavery, she became a symbol of emancipation for one of Cuba's largest slave insurrections. In the end, the slaves were declared free. This spread devotion to Our Lady of Charity even further.

In 1916, the pope visited the shrine of the Virgin of Charity and declared her the patron saint of Cuba. El Cobre Basilica was built to house her in 1927. In 1998, Pope John Paul II crowned her statue during his historic visit to communist Cuba.

The Virgin has collected many votive offerings from her grateful worshippers over the years. In the 1950s, Ernest Hemingway gave the Virgin the Nobel Prize for Literature he won after writing *The Old Man and the Sea* in Havana. The mother of Fidel and Raul Castro left a small golden guerrilla fighter at the feet of the Virgin as her sons battled the government of dictator Fulgencio Batista ahead of the Cuban Revolution.

Today, the Virgin of Charity in El Cobre continues to receive streams of visitors and stacks of votive gifts. Common objects left in more recent times include replicas of rafts, representing safe journeys to America, and photos of activists who have been imprisoned by Castro's government.



El Cobre Basilica, Santiago, Cuba

Prayer to Our Lady of Charity, Patroness of Cuba

Most Holy Mother of Charity, who came to us as a messenger of peace across the sea. You are the Mother of all Cubans. To you we come, Most Holy Mother of God to honor you with love as your children. To your motherly heart we entrust our desires and hopes our work and our prayers. We pray for our torn country that we may be able to build a nation based on peace and unity. We pray for our families that they may live in

fidelity and love.

We pray for our children that they may grow strong in spirit and in body. We pray for our young people that their faith may increase, as well as their attachment to the truth. We pray for the sick, the homeless, the lonely, the exiled, and for all suffering souls. We pray for the Catholic Church in Cuba, for its mission, for its priests, deacons, religious and laity.

We pray for the victory of justice and love in our country. Mother of Charity! We place ourselves under your mantle of protection! Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus! And to Him be the glory and the power now and forever. Amen.

Excerpts from the Diary of Saint Faustina



Chaplet of Divine Mercy can be found at: <https://www.praydivinemeracy.com/>

"My daughter, faithfully live up to the words which I speak to you. Do not value any external thing too highly, even if it were to seem very precious to you. Let go of yourself and abide with Me continually. Entrust everything to Me and do nothing on your own, and you will always have great freedom of spirit. No circumstances or events will ever be able to upset you. Set little store on what people say. Let everyone judge you as they like. Do not make excuses for yourself, it will do you no harm. Give away everything at the first sign of a demand, even if they were the most necessary things. Do not ask for anything without consulting Me. Allow them to take away even what is due you – respect, your good name – let your spirit rise above all that. And so, set free from everything, rest close to My Heart, not allowing your peace to be disturbed by anything. My pupil, consider (62) the words which I have spoken to you" (Diary, 1685).

"Daughter, I need sacrifice lovingly accomplished, because that alone has meaning for Me. Enormous indeed are the debts of the world which are due to Me; pure souls can pay them by their sacrifice, exercising mercy in spirit" (Dia1316).

"If a soul does not exercise mercy somehow or other, it will not obtain My mercy on the day of judgment. Oh, if only souls knew how to gather eternal treasure for themselves, they would not be judged, for they would forestall My judgment with their mercy" (Diary, 1317).

"O soul steeped in darkness, do not despair. All is not yet lost. Come and confide in your God, who is love and mercy...My child, listen to the voice of your merciful Father" (Diary, 1486).

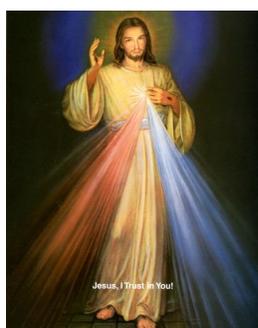


"My daughter, know that My Heart is mercy itself. From this sea of mercy, graces flow out upon the whole world. No soul that has approached Me has ever gone away unconsolated. All misery gets buried in the depths of My mercy, and every saving and sanctifying grace flows from this fountain..." (Diary, 1777).

"My Heart rejoices in this title of Mercy. Proclaim that mercy is the greatest attribute of God. All the works of My hands are crowned with mercy" (Diary, 300-301).

"This is the hour of great mercy for the whole world. I will allow you to enter into My mortal sorrow. In this hour, I will refuse nothing to the soul that makes a request of me in virtue of My Passion" (Diary, 1320). "At three o'clock, implore My mercy, especially for sinners; and, if only for a brief moment, immerse yourself in My Passion, particularly in My abandonment at the moment of agony" (Diary, 1320).

"Were a soul like a decaying corpse so that from a human standpoint, there would be no [hope of] restoration and everything would already be lost, it is not so with God. The miracle of Divine Mercy restores that soul in full. Oh, how miserable are those who do not take advantage of the miracle of God's mercy! You will call out in vain, but it will be too late" (Diary, 1448).



"The two rays denote Blood and Water. The pale ray stands for the Water which makes souls righteous. The red ray stands for the Blood which is the life of souls...These two rays issued forth from the very depths of My tender mercy when My agonized Heart was opened by a lance on the Cross. These rays shield souls from the wrath of My Father. Happy is the one who will dwell in their shelter, for the just hand of God shall not lay hold of him" (Diary, 299).



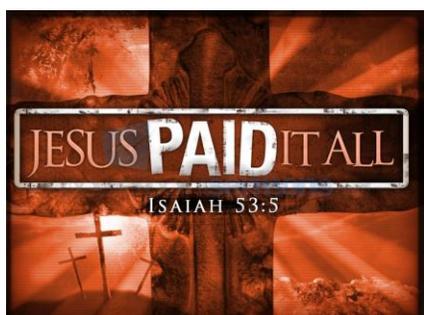
"Mankind will not have peace until it turns with trust to My mercy. Oh, how much I am hurt by a soul's distrust! Such a soul professes that I am Holy and Just but does not believe that I am Mercy and does not trust in My Goodness. Even the devils glorify My Justice but do not believe in My Goodness" (Diary, 300).

"How very much I desire the salvation of souls! My dearest secretary, write that I want to pour out My divine life into human souls and sanctify them, if only they were willing to accept My grace. The greatest sinners would achieve great sanctity, if only they would trust in My mercy. The very inner depths of My being are filled to overflowing with mercy, and it is being poured out upon all I have created. My delight is to act in a human soul and to fill it with My mercy (133) and to justify it. My kingdom on earth is My life in the human soul" (Diary, 1784)

"Say unceasingly the chaplet that I have taught you. Whoever will recite it will receive great mercy at the hour of death. Priests will recommend it to sinners as their last hope of salvation. Even if there were a sinner most hardened, if he were to recite this chaplet only once, he would receive grace from My infinite mercy. I desire that the whole world know My infinite mercy. I desire to grant unimaginable graces to those souls who trust in My mercy (Diary, 687).

"The souls that say this chaplet will be embraced by My mercy during their lifetime and especially at the hour of their death" (Diary, 754).

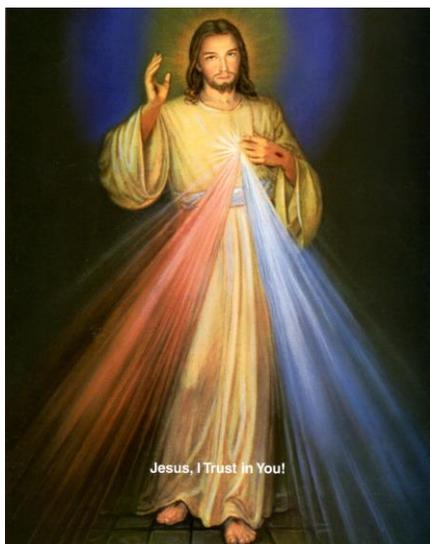
"Through the chaplet you will obtain everything, if what you ask for is compatible with My will" (Diary, 1731). "Oh, what great graces I will grant to souls who say this chaplet; the very depths of My tender mercy are stirred for the sake of those who say the chaplet. Write down these words, My daughter. Speak to the world about My mercy; let all mankind recognize My unfathomable mercy. It is a sign for the end times; after it will come (230) the day of justice. While there is still time, let them have recourse to the fount of My mercy; let them profit from the Blood and Water which gushed forth for them" (Diary, 848).



"My mercy is greater than your sins and those of the entire world. Who can measure the extent of my goodness? For you I descended from heaven to earth; for you I allowed myself to be nailed to the cross; for you I let my Sacred Heart be pierced with a lance, thus opening wide the source of mercy for you. Come, then, with trust to draw graces from this fountain. I never reject a contrite heart. Your misery has disappeared in the depths of My mercy" (Diary, 1485).

"...who will proclaim My great mercy. I shall protect them Myself at the hour of death, as My own glory. And even if the sins of souls were as dark as night, when the sinner turns to My mercy, he gives Me the greatest praise and is the glory of My Passion. When a soul extols My goodness, Satan trembles before it and flees to the very bottom of hell" (Diary, 378).

"My Heart overflows with great mercy for souls, and especially for poor sinners. If only they could understand that I am the best of Fathers to them and that it is for them that the Blood and Water flowed from My Heart as from a fount overflowing with mercy. For them I dwell in the tabernacle as King of Mercy. I desire to bestow My graces upon souls, but they do not want to accept them. You, at least, come to Me as often as possible and take these graces they do not want to accept. In this way you will console My Heart..." (Diary, 367).



"From all My wounds, like from streams, mercy flows for souls, but the wound in My Heart is the fountain of unfathomable mercy. From this fountain spring all graces for souls. The flames of compassion burn Me. I desire greatly to pour them out upon souls" (Diary, 1190).

"I desire to unite Myself with human souls; My great delight is to unite Myself with souls Know, My daughter, that when I come to a human heart in Holy Communion, My hands are full of all kinds of graces which I want to give to the soul. But souls do not even pay any attention to Me; they leave Me to Myself and busy themselves with other things. Oh, how sad I am that souls do not recognize Love! They treat Me as a dead object" (Diary, 1385).

"Oh, if sinners knew My mercy, they would not perish in such great numbers. Tell sinful souls not to be afraid to approach Me; speak to them of My great mercy" (Diary, 1396).

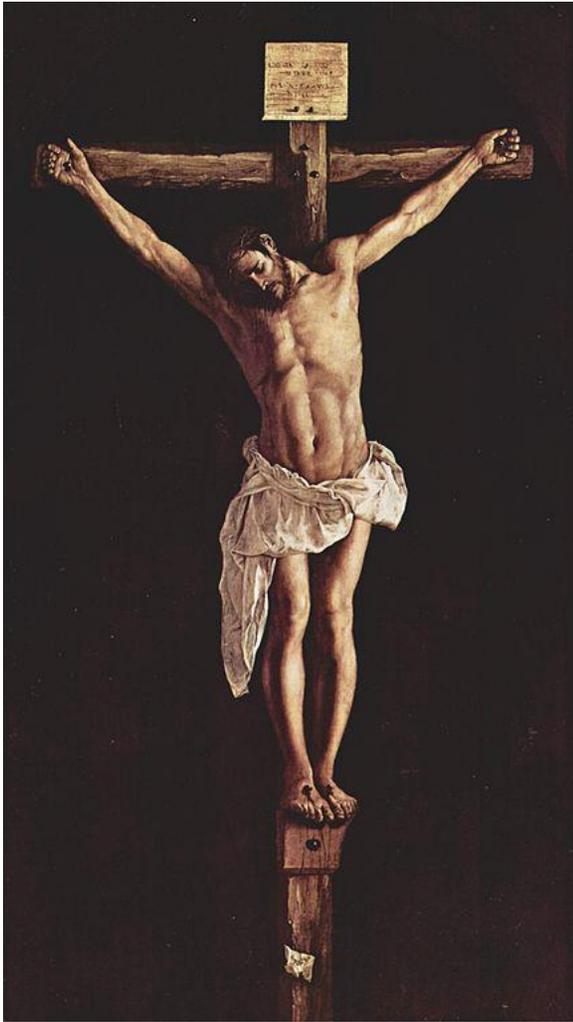


Jesus spoke these words to Sister Faustina, as recorded in her diary about the last days.

"Before the day of justice arrives, there will be given to people a sign in the heavens of this sort: All light in the heavens will be extinguished, and there will be great darkness over the whole earth. Then the sign of the cross will be seen in the sky, and from the openings where the hands and the feet of the Savior were nailed will come forth great lights which will light up the earth for a period of time. This will take place shortly before the last day

Jesus said, " The greatest sinners place their trust in My mercy. They have the right before others to trust in the abyss of My mercy. My daughter, write about My mercy towards tormented souls. Souls that make an appeal to My mercy delight me. To such souls I grant even more graces than they ask. I cannot punish even the greatest sinner if he makes an appeal to My compassion, but on the contrary, I justify him in My unfathomable and inscrutable mercy. Write: before I come as a just Judge, I first open wide the door of My mercy. He who refuses to pass through the door of My mercy must pass through the door of My justice."

Texts taken from the Diary of St. Faustina Kowalska: Divine Mercy in My Soul. Marian Press, Stockbridge, Massachusetts, 1996.



Proclaim that mercy is the greatest attribute of God. All the works of My hands are crowned with mercy. My love for all mankind is greater than the greatest sins you could commit. My mercy is especially longing for the greatest of sinners. Come to me and trust in my Mercy. I did not spare my own body from suffering for your sake.

Trust in His Mercy. Reach out to Jesus each day and tell him your problems, concerns and hopes. He is your brother...Your Savior...Your friend.

Celestial Music Discovered on Mantel of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Several scientific discoveries have been revealed around the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe; This is one of them; music was found in the Mantle of the Virgin forming musical notes with the stars and flowers of her dress. The researcher Fernando Ojeda made a scientific study on the position of stars and flowers in the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe where he checks through the geography, geometry, astronomy and music (associated with mathematics) the veracity of the piece, this allowed music experts to discover the composition of celestial music. *Copy and paste this link to your browser and hear the beautiful music found on the Tilma.* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqFaKpshs0k>



International Catholic Family Newsletter Is Published Monthly

Our mission statement is to motivate people to pray and to be Christian examples in their work, home and with others, for those needing the Light in a world of Darkness.

<https://catholicfamilynewsletter.com>



Pray the Rosary Daily to Save Souls.

Pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy for your Family.



Today, A Savior is Born