I find in my own life that saying “Jesus, I trust in You” is much easier than actually living it. Whether it be financial concerns, problems with the children or grandchildren, health issues, or any of life’s difficulties, I struggle to maintain inner peace and completely surrender to God’s will, which is love and mercy. Living trust in our Lord in times of adversity is an entirely different challenge than when things are going smoothly. A critical word in difficult times is “surrender” — we surrender to God’s will; we do our best and let God do the rest. If the outcome is not what we desired and the world around us is up in flames, we must try to maintain that peace that only He can give. We all have our struggles and battles in life, and Scripture tells us, “I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (Jn 16:33).

In my travels, I hear from so many people who have great trials and suffering. I wonder how they get through them; I have been blessed in my life and wonder if, should I have had to live under their circumstances, I would have the strength and courage that they do. But I realize that they get their strength from the Lord, and He can do all things. You have probably heard the saying, “The Lord never gives you more than you can handle.” I think a better saying is, “The Lord never gives you more than the two of you can handle!” The Lord gives people the strength to handle these tremendous trials, but a key word is surrender.

Saint Faustina knew how to surrender to the Lord even as events happened that she did not understand. She wrote, “So today I submit myself completely and with loving consent to Your holy will, O Lord, and to your most wise decrees, which are always full of clemency and mercy for me, though at times I can neither understand nor fathom them. O my master, I surrender myself completely to You, who are the rudder of my soul; steer it Yourself according to Your divine wishes. I enclose myself in Your most compassionate Heart, which is a sea of unfathomable mercy” (Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, 1450).

And when St. Faustina was faced with a diagnosis of advanced tuberculosis, she surrendered all to His will. She wrote, “After the first examination, the doctor found that my condition was grave. ‘We suspect, Sister, that you do have the illness about which you spoke to me. But Almighty God can do all things.’ ” “When I entered the room, I steeped myself in prayer of thanksgiving for everything the Lord had been sending me throughout my whole life, surrendering myself totally to His most holy will. A deep joy and peace flooded my soul. I felt a peace so great that, if death had come at that moment, I would not have said to it, ‘Wait, for I still have some matters to attend to.’ No, I would have welcomed it with joy, because I am ready for the meeting with Lord, not only today, but ever since the moment when I placed my complete trust in the Divine Mercy, resigning myself totally to His most holy will, full of mercy and compassion. I know what I am of myself …” (Diary, 1679).

What does the Lord ask of you and me? He told St. Faustina, “So, I turn to you, you — chosen souls, will you also fail to understand the love of My Heart? Here, too, My Heart finds disappointment; I do not find complete surrender to My love. So many reservations, so much distrust, so much caution. To comfort you, let Me tell you that there are souls living in the world who love Me dearly. I dwell in their hearts with delight. But they are few. In convents too, there are souls that fill My heart with joy. They bear My features; therefore My heavenly Father looks upon them with special pleasure” (Diary, 367).

As I grow older and reflect and learn more of the message of Divine Mercy, it becomes increasingly obvious why our Lord wanted the words “Jesus, I trust in You” below the Image. Trust in God and surrendering to His will is the basic tenet to living the message of Divine Mercy. So whatever trials you are facing at this time, let us strive to trust and surrender totally, knowing that “He must increase, but I must decrease” (Jn 3:30).
MADISON, OHIO
Valerie Ferrante wrote and told us:

Our Divine Mercy cenacle at Immaculate Conception Church in Madison, Ohio, held their induction ceremony after attending Mass together on Oct. 3, 2019, two days before St. Faustina’s feast day. Our 11 members persevered through 50 weeks of faith-sharing; prayer; formation; reading of Scripture, the Catechism and the Diary of St. Faustina; promoting the Divine Mercy message; and doing works of mercy.

Before affirming several years ago that we could start a cenacle, our pastor suggested I make an announcement after the Divine Mercy Sunday celebration to determine possible interest in a cenacle. Less than 20 attended the celebration, but several were interested in the cenacle. I followed up with an announcement in the bulletin about an information night, and a few more people were added. Finally, we were ready and had our first official weekly cenacle meeting on the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, May 31, 2018.

After about five months of formation and study, we did our first work of mercy together. During our parish’s fall 2018 Perpetual Adoration, our cenacle led a 3 o’clock Holy Hour for the sick and dying. We utilized the prayer program provided in the Marians’ pamphlet “Divine Mercy Chaplet for the Sick and Dying,” and incorporated beautiful songs for Adoration from the Sisters of Children of Mary. We played the “Litany of Reparation” on the Sisters’ CD, “I Thirst to be Loved.” Their music is truly anointed and touched many hearts. This and a couple of other songs from the CD were played, alternating with time for meditation, vocal prayer, and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Each attendee was also given Divine Mercy pamphlets, an 8-inch-by-10-inch Image of the Divine Mercy, and an explanation of the graces associated with the Image.

During Lent 2019, instead of the cenacle gathering to study St. Faustina’s Diary, we met weekly for 10 weeks to present to the parish Divine Mercy in the Second Greatest Story Ever Told, the video series narrated by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, on the parish’s large projector screen. This powerful production “reveals the dramatic history of God’s love and mercy as interwoven through the transformative message of St. Faustina, the miraculous appearance of Mary at Fatima, the witness of Maximilian Kolbe, and the world-changing papacy of Pope St. John Paul II.” Our Divine Mercy cenacle sponsored the event, and our pastor, Fr. Sean Donnelly, facilitated the large group presentation. Questions from the accompanying guidebook were discussed in small groups; at least one cenacle member was present in each group to assist the discussion. Attendance varied each night from 20 to 80 people. Divine Mercy pamphlets and 8-inch-by-10-inch Divine Mercy Images were distributed one evening. We also shared information about joining our cenacle and gained some new cenacle members.

The Divine Mercy Sunday celebration was organized by our Divine Mercy cenacle this past year. We prepared parishioners for the graces of the Feast with bulletin articles in the weeks preceding, as well as periodic articles about the graces of venerating the Image and the Chaplet. The celebration was well received and attended by about 70 people. We used the Celebrating Divine Mercy in Your Parish Guidebook from ShopMercy.org and had the full support of our pastor, Fr. Donnelly, and Deacon Meade. Scripture and Diary entries were read, then Father gave a wonderful talk and led the Divine Mercy Chaplet. We were blessed to have a large Divine Mercy Image from Poland, 5 or 6 feet tall, which attendees processed to venerate at the front of the church; we even had a first-class relic of St. Faustina for veneration. The celebration and veneration were moving, and we were so thankful for this time of mercy and so many graces!

We perform some monthly and daily works of mercy, as well. Our members gather in the church on the first Sunday of each month and recite the Chaplet of Divine Mercy during a period of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament held between the two Sunday masses. More parishioners are starting to join us, and some are even leading decades of the Chaplet. For another work of mercy, each of our 11 cenacle members has chosen at least one hour per day during which to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet for the souls that are dying at that hour. We also provide a variety of Divine Mercy pamphlets, prayer cards, and 8-inch-by-10-inch Images in our church vestibule for ongoing promotion of the Divine Mercy message and devotion.

In Oct. 2019, the docudrama Love and Mercy: Faustina was shown for the first time in 700 movie theaters across the nation. Our Divine Mercy cenacle members were prepared for the sold-out showing in Mentor, Ohio: Members had prepared 100 packets with 8-inch-by-10-inch Divine Mercy Images of Jesus; Divine Mercy Chaplet prayer cards; and the pamphlet “The Message of Divine Mercy: As Easy as ABC.” As moviegoers exited the movie, we fortified them with these packets as ways to set into motion the devotions and message of Divine Mercy they had witnessed in the docudrama! They were surprised and absolutely delighted to receive them! Several asked what parish we were from, and someone even called the office because she wanted to know where she could get more Divine Mercy Images and pamphlets to give away!

Our December work of mercy was to support Mya Women’s Center, a crisis pregnancy help center in a nearby town. Praying for the unborn and an end to abortion are part of our daily Chaplet prayer intentions, so we added a corporal work of mercy and donated many new baby items (diapers, layettes, blankets) and some items for the young mothers.

We are currently considering Fr. Gaitley’s book 33 Days to Merciful Love: A Do-It-Yourself Retreat in Preparation for Consecration to Divine Mercy. The plan is that our cenacle will do this retreat weekly in place of our weekly cenacle study and then present it to the parish. Our cenacle members will then be prepared to be small group leaders for the larger parish retreat.
CENACLES UPDATE

DELTA, COLORADO
Maureen Smuin wrote and told us:

We are a new cenacle and dot on the EADM map!

Many months ago, I wrote to the EADM office, asked for, and received a packet on starting a cenacle. It was such a blessing, and the very next newsletter featured Holy Apostles in Colorado Springs and the Divine Mercy Perpetual Adoration Chapel. It was so timely! I was visiting family prior to a discipleship retreat for our Pueblo diocese. I went to morning Mass at Holy Apostles and met Pete Opetaia. We ended up starting a cenacle with help from the Holy Apostles cenacle. Pete and Rose Mary Arendt gave a wonderful presentation, “Oceans of Divine Mercy,” at St. Michael Parish, and 50 people attended the beautiful seminar. Father Carl Wuertin, director of vocations for the Diocese of Pueblo, was the guest celebrant for the Mass.

In October, I hosted some preliminary meetings. We discussed the format and watched the DVD, “I Am a Voice Crying for Mercy.” Jesus has called such wonderful people to this mission!

We had our follow-up meeting and agreed to regular meetings on Thursdays from 1 to 3 p.m. We conclude with the Divine Mercy Chaplet, recited during Eucharistic Adoration. At 7 p.m., the Spanish-language group sings the Chaplet in Spanish during Adoration; it is the same familiar melody, and so I could sing along in English.

Now we are praying that a Spanish cenacle starts. Our pastor, Fr. Albeiro Herrera-Cro, and Deacon Price Hatcher are both very supportive of Divine Mercy and Eucharistic Adoration.

I look forward to week 50, when we will have our beautiful induction ceremony, as that will be this coming Feast of the Immaculate Conception. We are enjoying the format and the integration of Scripture, the Catechism, and the Diary of St. Faustina.

Thanks be to God and to Our Lady!

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO
Vicki Kapron wrote and told us:

The Divine Mercy prayer cenacle at St. Gabriel’s Parish in Colorado Springs is active with 16 members, of which 13 are currently EADM members. We have four new members we hope will be inducted within the next four to six months.

Our cenacle began in 2016 with a small group led by Teresita and Tony Valerio, who prayed the Divine Mercy Chaplet and Rosary after daily Mass. We started reading the Diary of St. Faustina and now use the Cenacle Formation Manuals.

We are active in service to our church and community and offer opportunities to learn about Divine Mercy at our parish during Lent. We donated a six foot image of Jesus, the Divine Mercy, to our parish. It was blessed on Divine Mercy Sunday 2018, and is now on display in our nave.

We are blessed for the community we have become in growing together in our walk with the Lord, and are grateful for Deacon Mike McGrady, who has supported our prayer group and the promotion of Divine Mercy at St. Gabriel’s.

We thank Our Lady, Mary, the Mother of Mercy, for guiding us, and we pray we can continue to share God’s message of mercy and love with all those He places on our path.

We are hoping that Dr. Thatcher can come to our parish to do a retreat on Divine Mercy, the Eucharist, Our Lady, and the gift of life.

Mark Your Calendar!

Bryan Thatcher, MD, will be leading a pilgrimage to the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy around Oct. 5, 2020, the Feast of St. Faustina. The group will leave from Tampa, and the trip will include talks on Divine Mercy; Mass; opportunities for Confession; and a tour of the National Shrine. Although specifics are being worked out at the time of this printing, it will be a spirit-filled adventure. Please call the EADM office at 1-877-380-0727 for more details.
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Here are the official guides for prayer cenacles, using the Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska and integrating it with Sacred Scripture and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. By Dr. Bryan and Susan Thatcher.

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The Fifth World Apostolic Congress on Mercy (WACOM), an international gathering of thousands of Divine Mercy devotees, will be held in Apia, Samoa, in 2020, from Aug. 10-15. This was announced by WACOM Secretary General Fr. Patrice Chocholski on the last day of the fourth WACOM, held in the Philippines.

The Archdiocese of Samoa-Apia was established in 1850 and counts around 42,000 Catholics in its flock. As the host of the fifth WACOM, it will begin preparations for the religious meeting, held every three years and aimed at furthering the devotion to Jesus, the Divine Mercy, in the Catholic Church.

This event is special to me. I visited Samoa for the first time in 1998. Archbishop Pio Taofinu’u warmly greeted me, and I spoke on the main island as well as the nearby island of Savaii to spread the message of Divine Mercy. Archbishop Taofinu’u appointed Fr. Alapati Lui Mata’eliga to oversee the Divine Mercy EADM cenacles, and after his death, Rome appointed Fr. Alapati the next archbishop.

I hope many of you can attend this beautiful event. Go to WACOM5Samoa2020.com to register.

Lastly, I am in need of 1,000 Rosaries to send to the Congress. Please ask your local Rosary makers to send Rosaries to:

EADM, 10016 Park Place Avenue, Riverview, FL 33578
— Bryan Thatcher, MD

Save the Date!

The 16th Annual Divine Mercy Medicine, Bioethics, & Spirituality Conference will be held on May 5-6, 2020. Come join us at our new venue!

The conference will be held at Assumption College, Worcester, Massachusetts, on the third floor of the new Tsotsis Family Academic Center.

The keynote speaker will be the Most Rev. Robert Joseph McManus, STD, bishop of Worcester. His talks will be “Formation of a Conscience in the Exercise of Religious Liberty” and “Aligning Our Mission and Vocation: Making Every Day Count.”

Other featured speakers include Director of the Association of Marian Helpers Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, addressing “Church Teaching on End-of-Life Issues”; Dr. Brian Burkey, discussing “Difficult Conversations: Delivering Bad News to Patients About Their Condition”; and Marie Romagnano, MSN, RN, CRC, CCM, founder of Healthcare Professionals for Divine Mercy.

To register, go to TheDivineMercy.org/worcester or call Peter at the Marian Helpers Center at 413-298-3691.

WANT TO START A CENACLE? Call the EADM office toll free at 1-877-380-0727, and we’ll send you a free informational packet with a DVD on the ministry.
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- March 7-11: St. Peter’s Parish, Poughkeepsie, New York
- May 5-6: Healthcare Conference, Worcester, Massachusetts
- June 13: Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, Plymouth, Michigan

If your cenacle would like to have Dr. Thatcher speak at your parish, call the EADM office at 1-877-380-0727.