

DIVINE MERCY

IN THE SECOND GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD

GUIDEBOOK

Questions for Review and Discussion

Session 10

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Jesus, I Trust in You

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Jesus, I Trust in You

SESSION TEN

THE FINAL QUESTION

Step 1

INTRODUCTION

As we wrap up the Second Greatest Story Ever Told, we'll now look at how that great story can continue with *our* stories.

Step 2

OPENING PRAYER

*Heavenly Father,
please open our hearts, minds, and souls
to the truth of your Divine Mercy.
Help us to take to heart all that we're learning
and experiencing about your mercy,
so it may transform our lives
and make us better instruments of mercy to others.
We ask all this in Jesus's name
and through the powerful intercession
of Our Blessed Mother, Mary...*

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners
now and in the hour of our death. Amen.*

Step 3

VIEW VIDEO FOR EPISODE 10

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

Step 4

[Go over these questions in your small group. It's alright if your group only gets through a few of them during your discussion.]

- 1. What was your favorite part from the video? In other words, what most touched your heart or enlightened your mind?**
- 2. Pope Francis, inspired by St. John Paul II, believes that *now is the time of mercy*. Reflect on his powerful words:**

[L]isten to the voice of the Spirit that speaks to the whole Church in this our time, which is in fact, the time of mercy. I am certain of this. . . . We have been living in the time of mercy for 30 or more years, up to now. It is the time of mercy in the whole Church. It was instituted by [St.] John Paul II. He had the “intuition” that this was the time of mercy.

—Pope Francis to the parish priests of the diocese of Rome, March 2014

What do these words mean for you? How do they make you feel? What is your response?

- 3. In the video, I shared my own personal story, hoping that it would help you make the Second Greatest Story your story. I shared about how, when I was in college, I didn't think I could be like the holy students I saw all around me or like the saints I learned about in my theology classes. I shared about how I found hope that I really and truly could become a saint, despite my great weakness, by giving my life totally to Jesus through Mary, the “quickest and easiest” way to holiness. I shared how I became discouraged and disappointed when the “warm fuzzies” of that consecration wore off, and how I believed that Mary had rejected me. I shared about how my image of Mary was one that made me want to keep my distance. ***What part of all this most resonates with you? For instance, when have you felt that you could not live up to the lives of the saints? Or when has discouragement caused you to feel rejected by Mary or one of the saints to whom you have devotion? Can you share any part of those experiences? How might you look at those experiences differently now?*****

Step 4

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

4. Saint Maximilian Kolbe's testimony helped heal my devotion to Mary, especially the following two citations:

"My dear, dear brothers, our dear little, little mother, the Immaculate Mary can do anything for us. We are her children. Turn to her. She will overcome anything."

—*A Man for Others*, pg. 66

"Sometimes, my dear ones, the thought, a sad longing, as if a plea or a complaint may occur to you, "Does the Immaculata still love me?" Most beloved children! I tell you all and each one individually in her name, mark that, in her name! She loves every one of you. She loves you very much and at every moment with no exception. This I repeat for you in her name."

—*The Kolbe Reader* (Libertyville, IL: Franciscan Mayrtown Press, 1987, pg. 96)

What part of St. Maximilian Kolbe's words most reassure you of Mary's love for you personally? Why? What new insight do they provide for you, if any?

5. Saint John Paul II taught that Mary is the one who brings us to the "Fountain of Mercy," the pierced side of Jesus. She's the one whose powerful prayers help us to trust in Divine Mercy. She's the one who helps us to believe that God loves us not because of what we do but because of what God has done for us and that God loves us because he's good, not because we are. She helps us understand that we need not hide from God out of fear. She helps us realize that Jesus did not come for the righteous but for sinners and that it's our misery that attracts him and that the more weak, broken, and

sinful we are, the more his merciful Heart goes out to us. She helps us realize that the greater the sinner, the greater right he has to God's mercy. She's the one who helps us feel contrition and sorrow for our sins.

Now, your understanding of God's mercy may have grown or deepened through this program. ***What is your response to those changes? Do you want to ask Mary for more help in coming to better understand and accept God's love for you? What can you do to allow her to give you that help?***



SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

Step 4

6. In the video, I shared how my staff and I have received countless emails, phone calls, and letters from people sharing the powerful ways that Mary has worked in their lives through the consecration. ***Do you know of any powerful stories related to Marian consecration? Or can you share a story or testimony about Marian consecration that encouraged you or caused you to want to learn more about it?***

7. I concluded the video by making three recommendations. Let's look at them again:

(1) *Make, renew, and spread Marian consecration.* So, if you haven't made your consecration, then make it! If you have made it, then renew it — and not just every year but *every day*. And then, like St. Maximilian Kolbe, spread it! I mean, if Marian consecration is the quickest, easiest, and surest way to become a saint, then we've got to tell everybody!

(2) *Experience Divine Mercy.* Now, as we've already learned, Mary is the best help for bringing us to experience the merciful love of her Son, which is why my first recommendation was to make the consecration. But what else helps us to experience Divine Mercy? Of course, becoming more deeply aware of our sins and going to Confession more frequently helps us to experience Divine Mercy. I mean, if we don't realize we're sinners, Divine Mercy doesn't make sense! Also, along with Mass, Confession, and the reading of Sacred Scripture, I encourage you to get to know more deeply the Divine Mercy message and devotion that comes to us through St. Faustina. For instance, read her *Diary* and learn more about Divine Mercy Sunday, the Image of Divine Mercy, the Novena, Chaplet, and Hour of Great Mercy. All of that can help you to better experience Divine Mercy when you turn to prayer, the Sacraments, and Sacred Scripture.

(3) *Live Divine Mercy.* Now, living Divine Mercy means being merciful to others in deed, word, and prayer. It means forgiving those who have hurt us and letting go of resentment, bitterness, and hate. It means crying out for mercy on ourselves, our families, our society, and on the whole world, for instance, by praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

What changes will you have to make to follow these recommendations? Will it be difficult for you to make such changes? What help might you ask of this group with whom you have shared so much, so that you can follow these recommendations, even the most difficult?



Step 4

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

8. Throughout this series, we've heard all about what I believe is the greatest story after Sacred Scripture, the Second Greatest Story Ever Told. Now, it's certainly not great because of the teller, and I apologize for my many shortcomings in telling it. But despite my weaknesses, I knew it had to be told! I mean, the story surrounding the life of St. John Paul II, which includes the amazing history of Poland, the mission of St. Faustina Kowalska, St. Maximilian Kolbe, and the children of Fatima is truly amazing, and I hope you now agree that it really is the Second Greatest Story Ever Told.

But why did God give us such an incredible story right now in our time? I believe he gave it to try to convince us of something that may seem too good to be true. Again, it's the good news that *now is the time of mercy*. And the whole story, I believe, is meant to convince us of that. I hope it has convinced you and that you've been encouraged by the good news of this time of mercy. ***So what difference is this good news going to make in your life? How will you invite others to believe in and live this good news of God's mercy?***

Homework: Don't forget to read and reflect on all the questions that you don't cover during your small-group discussion!

Step 5

CONCLUSION

Now that we've participated in this entire series *Divine Mercy in the Second Greatest Story Ever Told* and have been encouraged to make its story our own, one question remains: *Will we, in fact, make it our own?* In other words, will we consecrate ourselves to Jesus through Mary and encourage others to do so as well? Will we strive to experience Divine Mercy? And will we put mercy into action in our daily lives? (To learn more, visit MarianMissionaries.org.) Now, before the Closing Prayer, take a time of silence to speak with God about this.

Jesus, I Trust in You

