

DIVINE MERCY

IN THE SECOND GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD

GUIDEBOOK

Questions for Review and Discussion

Session 6

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Jesus, I Trust in You

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Jesus, I Trust in You

SESSION SIX

FATIMA

Step 1

INTRODUCTION

In the last session, we saw the culmination of God's School of Trust in the mission of St. John Paul II and the message of Divine Mercy he proclaimed to the world. Now we'll look at others who heralded that same work through their lives and efforts.

Step 2

OPENING PRAYER

*Most Holy Trinity —
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit —
I adore Thee profoundly.
I offer Thee the most precious Body, Blood, Soul,
and Divinity of Jesus Christ,
present in all the tabernacles of the world,
in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges,
and indifferences whereby He is offended.
And through the infinite merits
of His Most Sacred Heart
and the Immaculate Heart of Mary,
I beg of Thee the conversion of poor sinners.*

—Prayer of Fatima

Step 3

VIEW VIDEO FOR EPISODE 6

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. Poor Pope Benedict XV! He became pope just a month after the start of the worst war in history up to that time. He worked for peace and fervently prayed for peace, but nothing seemed to be working; the war ground on, taking millions of lives and devastating Europe. Finally, with the whole Church, Pope Benedict prayed a novena to Mary, the Mother of God, and on May 13, 1917, she appeared to three shepherd children in Fatima on the 8th day of the novena. Of course, Benedict XV wouldn't have known about this until much later, if at all. (The apparitions of Fatima were not approved by the Church until 1930.) ***When in your life have you fervently prayed for something, thought your prayers weren't answered, and then discovered after the fact that God did answer your prayers? Or have you ever prayed for something and had your prayers answered in a way that surprised you or that you did not expect?***

3. The "First Secret" of Fatima consisted of a vision of hell that had a profound effect on the three children. Read and reflect on Lucia's description of that vision:

Our Lady showed us a great sea of fire which seemed to be under the earth. Plunged in this fire were demons and souls in human form, like transparent burning embers, all blackened or burnished bronze, floating about in the conflagration, now raised into the air by the flames that issued from within themselves together with great clouds of smoke, now falling back on every side like sparks in a huge fire, without weight or equilibrium, and amid shrieks and groans of pain and despair, which horrified us and made us tremble with fear. The demons could be distinguished by their terrifying and repellent likeness to frightful and unknown animals, all black and transparent. This vision lasted but an instant. How can we ever be grateful enough to our kind heavenly Mother, who had already prepared us by promising, in the first apparition, to take us to heaven? Otherwise, I think we would have died of fear and terror.

What is your reaction to this description? How do you feel after reading it? Afraid? Prayerful? More determined to avoid hell? More determined to help others avoid that place of unending misery? What action can you take in response to this vision?

Step 4

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

4. The Second Secret of Fatima foretold terrible wars, famine, and harsh persecution of the Church, all of which came to pass. However, it could have been prevented if Our Lady's message had been heeded. Imagine that: no World War II, no Nazi or Soviet domination, no concentration camps, no major famines, no mass rapes, no orphan crises, no major loss of faith to atheism. If people only knew in 1917 the full extent of the horrors that could have been prevented, as we do today, the message of Fatima surely would have been heeded by all! But they did know it. Our Lady of Fatima had warned them; she foretold what would happen.

Now we find ourselves in a great time of mercy, a time when, as we learned in the previous episode, we're being asked to cry out to God for mercy. Why? Because without Divine Mercy, there will be Divine Justice and a great punishment for humanity's many sins, sins that are much worse and more extensive than those that led to World War I and II. But this time, the warning doesn't come through three shepherd children. Rather, it comes through three popes: John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis, all of whom have urged the Church to heed the present time of mercy.

How will you take this urgent message of mercy to heart? What are you going to do with it now that you've heard it? How are you going to live it?

5. The Third Secret of Fatima paints a symbolic picture of the suffering of the Church amid the "wars, famine, and persecution" that Mary had warned about. It's a graphic image of pain, sorrow, corpses, and killing. Apparently, Our Lady of Fatima, who also showed the children a terrible vision of hell, is not afraid to emphasize the reality of suffering caused by sin. Perhaps that's because, from her vantage point of heaven, she sees all the offenses against God in great detail, and it breaks her Immaculate Heart. Also, she sees how so many of her children don't let her into their hearts and don't accept her tender care. Well, through the first Saturday devotion, which is part of the message of Fatima, we're essentially called to comfort our Blessed Mother by spending time with her. This makes "reparation" for sins committed. ***Have you ever spent time with Mary for the purpose of consoling her Immaculate Heart? If so, what was that like? How have you experienced her giving consolation to your heart?***

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

Step 4

6. In the video, I shared that when my father first heard the story of Our Lady of Fatima and the Miracle of the Sun, he responded by saying, “If people heard that, they’d believe!” ***What specific part of what we’ve covered in Divine Mercy in the Second Greatest Story Ever Told do you think might convince someone to believe in God, who is Love and Mercy itself? For instance, was it something having to do with Saints Margaret Mary, Faustina Kowalska, John Paul II, another part of the Fatima messages, or something else we’ve covered?***

7. Some 70,000 people saw the Miracle of the Sun at Fatima, and they surely told others about it. ***Have you ever witnessed something you consider a miracle or an extraordinary grace? What was it?***

8. Normally, God doesn’t work spectacular miracles for the world to see as he did at Fatima. However, he does often speak to us in our daily lives in subtle but real ways. ***Can you think of a time recently when God gave you a “sign” or evidence of his power, presence, or providence in your life? For instance, describe a time when you felt a deep peace that seemed to come out of nowhere in the midst of a distressing situation. Or share a time when you received an inspiration or light in the midst of a moment when you were confused about a problem. Or explain a time when you were given clear direction, a sign of confirmation, or courage regarding a course of action.***

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

As remarkable as the events at Fatima were and still are, they were only one part of God's plan to impact the world. In our next session, we'll take another step into the astonishing unfolding of the Second Greatest Story Ever Told.

CLOSING PRAYER

*My God,
I believe, I adore, I hope, and I love Thee!
I ask pardon for those who do not believe,
do not adore, do not hope, and do not love Thee. ...
O, My Jesus,
forgive us our sins,
save us from the fires of Hell,
lead all souls to Heaven,
especially those in most need of Thy mercy.*

—Prayer of Fatima

Jesus, I Trust in You

