

Bishop to dedicate diocese to Divine Mercy devotion

By Patrick Downes
Hawaii Catholic Herald

On the second Sunday of Easter, Bishop Larry Silva will dedicate the Diocese of Honolulu to the Divine Mercy, a relatively new devotion to the mercy of the risen Christ drawn from the life and spiritual diaries of St. Faustina Kowalska, a Polish saint canonized by Pope John Paul II in 2000.

The dedication will take place during a ceremony and Mass starting at 2 p.m. on April 23 at Star of the Sea Church in Honolulu.

Honolulu is believed to be the first diocese to dedicate itself to the Divine Mercy, according to Kathleen Keefe, director of the Divine Mercy apostolate in the archdiocese of New York.

"This is so wonderful," she said. The Divine Mercy image was enthroned at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace here several years ago, she added.

The bishop made his intention known to the priests of the diocese in a Feb. 21 letter in which explained why he was making the dedication.

"I want to do this with one special intention in mind," he wrote, "an increase of local vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life in Hawaii."

He urged all pastors to have Divine Mercy celebrations in their own parishes and enclosed five different informa-



Bishop Larry Silva



St. Faustina Kowalska

tional brochures on the Divine Mercy devotion with his letter.

"I would like to encourage you to consider some celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday in your parish, joining in prayer for this special intention for an increase of local vocations," he said.

The dedication ceremony begins with a 2 p.m. Divine Mercy holy hour led by Blessed Sacrament Father Mark del Rosario, pastor of Star of the Sea Church, followed by the Divine Mercy prayer and Mass at 3 p.m., celebrated by Bishop Silva. Refreshments will be served afterwards.

Honolulu resident Josephine Yu, who requested the diocesan dedication, has also arranged for a nine-day Divine Mercy Novena in preparation for the dedication at Blessed Sacrament Church in Pauoa at 2:45 p.m. beginning on Good Friday, April 14, and running every day, including Easter Sunday, through April 22. Each novena celebration, except those



The Divine Mercy image of Jesus

on Good Friday and Holy Saturday, includes a Mass.

St. Faustina Kowalska was a member of the Congregation of Sisters of the Our Lady of Mercy who reportedly received a vision of Jesus, which she described in her diaries. She died in Krakow, Poland, in 1938 at age 33.

Her written account of the apparition was initially banned by the Vatican, which based its judgment on the church's long-held suspicions of private

revelation. The late Pope John Paul II, when he was archbishop of Krakow, was instrumental in reversing the destiny of Faustina Kowalska. He had her diaries re-translated for reconsideration by the Vatican, which lifted the censure in 1978.

Pope John Paul beatified St. Faustina Kowalska in 1993 and canonized her in 2000. Today, her writings and the Divine Mercy movement they engendered have millions of followers around the world.

In her diary, St. Faustina's quotes Jesus as telling her: "I have opened my heart as a living fountain of mercy. Let all souls draw life from it."

Among Jesus' requests was the establishment of the second Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday. Pope John Paul II did that in 2000.

A painting of the image of Jesus, as St. Faustina saw him, has become the icon of the movement. In it Jesus has one hand raised in benediction and the other resting on his chest, from which shine red and white rays of light.

According to St. Faustina, Christ demanded to have this image painted and venerated. It can be found reproduced all over the world.

St. Faustina was also reported to have the spiritual gifts of a hidden stigmata, bilocation, the reading of human souls and prophecy.



Diocesan Center, Conference Room 2.