

FATHER KNOWS BEST

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Some Insights from the Diary of St. Faustina

Learning how to grow in holiness and to be an instrument of God's mercy is a lifelong process, but in St. Faustina's Diary, *Divine Mercy in My Soul*, God has given us a beautiful book of insights in how to do precisely that.

Reading the diary helps one to discover the spiritual principles that made Sister Faustina a saint and can enable us to become saints as well.

Consider what this one paragraph offers to us:

(1499) At that moment, I saw Jesus, who said, "I am pleased with what you are doing. And you can continue to be at peace if you always do the best you can in respect to this work of mercy. Be absolutely as frank as possible with your confessor. Satan gained nothing by

tempting you, because you did not enter into conversation with him. Continue to act in this way. You gave me great glory today by fighting so faithfully. Let it be confirmed and engraved in your heart that I am always with you, even if you don't feel my presence at the time of battle."

1. We need always to do our best. God is pleased with us when we do the best we can. No one is perfect and God does not expect perfection from us. He understands and forgives us our faults and failings, but He delights in us when we give it our all. God deserves our best each and every time He asks something from us. Doing God's will each and every day in all situations will guarantee us a peace that will be with us even in the midst of the struggles and sufferings that come our way.

2. We need to be frank with our confessor. So often in the diary, Jesus reminded Sister Faustina that He would speak to her through her confessor. When she was open and honest with the priest in confession, Sister Faustina was strengthened with the grace of the sacrament and given clarity about what God expected from her. Being open with her confessor was another way of trusting Jesus. The same is true for each of us in our relationship with our confessor.

3. We need to avoid conversing with Satan. The devil, as a fallen angel, is very intelligent and wily and as the father of lies can get us confused, discouraged, and misled in no time. When we are being tempted in any way, it is foolish to let our minds wander and start to go down paths of musing or imagination that will only lead to sin. As soon as we recognize our thoughts are not good ones, we need to let go of them, rather than engage them. That way we avoid inadvertently conversing with Satan and in doing so we avoid trouble.

4. We need to fight faithfully. Life is a spiritual battle. Anyone who seeks to grow in holiness will become involved in spiritual warfare. God offers us gifts of grace and the devil does what he can to lead us to sin. Jesus calls us to love one another, to follow His example and lay down our lives. Our weak and sinful nature insists we take care of ourselves doing what we want when we want. That's the heart of the battle, and God calls us to fight and to fight faithfully. When we do fight and do it faithfully, we give God greater glory.

5. We need to trust in God's constant presence. God is always with us. God wants us to engrave that in our hearts. God wants the knowledge of His presence to be a source of strength for us. He wants us to be confirmed in it at all times. What power that can bring us, to live each day at all times knowing that God is with us. God is love and mercy and is present to us now and always. We need to trust Him each and every day.

6. We can not rely on feelings. Obviously, we don't always feel God's presence. We don't always feel like we are loved. We don't always feel that God forgives us and invites us closer, even in our sinfulness. That is why we can not rely on our feelings. Unlike God's word to us, our feelings cannot always be trusted. In fact, they can rarely be trusted. It is by acting on the right decisions of our intellect and will that we do God's will, not by being led or swayed by our ever-changing emotions. Feelings come and go; instead we need to place our faith and trust on God's word of love and mercy.



