



SILENT HOMILIES

One Name a Day

*The SOS Divine Mercy Chaplet Association
and why seven minutes can be enough*



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Little Treasures



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Before You Begin



There are already books that explain the Divine Mercy Chaplet bead by bead. This one is about a smaller work that grew from a single page in Saint Faustina's Diary.

In passage 1565 Jesus does not ask her to pray for humanity in general. He says, "My daughter, help Me to save a certain dying sinner. Say the chaplet that I have taught you for him." A certain sinner. One person.

The SOS Divine Mercy Chaplet Association exists because Canon Jason Jones and I read that line and decided it still asked for a practical answer. Canon Jason has since died. I continue to send the names from Our Lady of Margam, a small Catholic parish in South Wales.

Each day members receive one first name. They pray one Chaplet for that person. It takes about seven minutes.

This book is not a new doctrine, and it is not an advertisement. The Association is only a pastoral way of taking Faustina's page seriously. The Church does not require anyone to join. The dying person remains a first name only. We are not given their story, and we do not ask for it.

If you already pray the Chaplet, you may begin with the chapter on one name. If you have never said it, begin with the beads. If you are wondering whether to join, read the chapter that asks you to think first.

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Chapter 1

What SOS is for



SOS, in ordinary speech, is a call for help. Those three letters stand in front of the Divine Mercy Chaplet because the work is exactly that: a call for help on behalf of someone who may have no words left.

Someone, somewhere, is dying today with a first name and a struggle the rest of us will never see. Members agree to take that name and to offer the Father the Passion of His Son for that soul.

This is not a replacement for the last sacraments. A priest at the bed, Confession, the anointing, Holy Communion as viaticum — these remain the Church's ordinary mercy at the end. I say that as a parish priest and a hospital chaplain. If a dying Catholic can receive the sacraments, call a priest. The Association does not take the place of that call.

The Chaplet is what can be done when you are not in the room, when you do not know the family, and when the only information you have been trusted with is a first name. We keep that information limited on purpose. The dying person's privacy matters. Members are not being invited into someone's private life. They are being invited to pray.

Reflection

Christianity notices particular people.

A hospital list can turn a dying person into a case, a bed number, a diagnosis. The Church keeps using names at Baptism, at Confirmation, and at the grave. The Association keeps only a first name, but it is still a name.

The person whose message arrives today is not “the dying” in general. They are Marie, or John, or Anna. God already knows the rest. We do not need the rest in order to pray.

It is worth asking whether the people nearest to us have become cases as well — “the old man next door,” “the woman in the third pew” — when they still have names.

A Short Prayer

Jesus, help us to notice the person in front of us, and the person whose name we are given today. Amen.

Chapter 2

A certain dying sinner



Faustina wrote that she had entered the chapel for a moment when the request came.

“My daughter, help Me to save a certain dying sinner. Say the chaplet that I have taught you for him.”

She began to pray. What she saw, she says, was a man dying in terrible torment and struggle. His guardian angel was defending him and seemed almost powerless against the misery of that soul. A multitude of devils waited. While she said the Chaplet she saw Jesus as He is shown in the image. The rays from His Heart covered the sick man. The powers of darkness fled. The man died in peace. When she came to herself she understood how important the Chaplet was for the dying. It appeases the anger of God.

That is Diary 1565. The Church does not require us to have the same vision. She does allow us to take the request seriously.

Jesus did not give her a list. He drew her attention to one man. Sending one first name a day is a practical attempt to keep that particularity. It is not a claim that Jesus founded the Association. It is a pastoral response to words the Church has allowed us to read.

The vision is serious. It is also full of mercy. The last image is not the crowd of demons. It is the man dying in peace, covered by the rays.

Reflection

One person can matter completely to God even when almost nobody else knows what is happening.

Most deaths are not public. There is no camera. There is a room, a struggle, and perhaps a family still travelling. Faustina was asked to help one man she would never meet in this life.

We can live as if only large numbers count — campaigns, headlines, crowds. The Diary points in the other direction. A hidden hour can be the hour that matters most.

If I only pray when a story is famous, I have not yet understood what Jesus asked of her.

A Short Prayer

Lord, as Your rays covered the man Faustina saw, cover the person whose name we are given. Amen.

Chapter 3

The beads Jesus taught



The Chaplet is prayed on ordinary rosary beads. Jesus taught it to Faustina in Vilnius on 13 and 14 September 1935. There is no special set to buy.

On the large beads we offer the Father the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world. On the small beads we ask for mercy for the sake of His sorrowful Passion. At the end we say three times, “Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.”

About seven minutes is a realistic time if the prayer is not turned into a second Rosary with extra speeches between the decades. The Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy have asked people not to load the Chaplet with meditations Jesus did not give. The words are already the offering of Christ to the Father. They are enough.

People sometimes wait for a quiet chapel before they begin. Faustina was told to say the Chaplet often, which is a way of saying that the kitchen and the road are allowed. Most members will pray in those places: a parked car, a work break, a kitchen after the message arrives.

The Church gives us prayers that do not require ideal conditions. That is a kindness, not a lowering of the prayer.

Reflection

We often wait for the right room before we pray.

The Chaplet was given to a nun who was still expected to keep her ordinary duties. It can be said in a corridor as well as in a chapel. That is one reason it reaches the dying. The last hour does not wait for our timetable.

If I can only pray when the house is quiet and the candles are lit, I will miss many of the hours when prayer is needed.

A prayer simple enough for a kitchen is not a lesser prayer. It is a prayer that can be used where people actually are.

A Short Prayer

Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son. Have mercy on us and on the whole world. Amen.

Chapter 4

What He promised for the dying



Jesus attached promises to this prayer that still surprise people who think of beads only as a private comfort.

He said that when the Chaplet is said in the presence of the dying, He will stand between the Father and that person not as the just Judge but as the merciful Saviour. That is Diary 1541.

He said that at the hour of death He defends, as His own glory, the soul that will say the Chaplet, and that the same help is given when others say it for a dying person. When it is said at the bedside, God's anger is placated and unfathomable mercy envelops the soul. That is Diary 811.

He told Faustina to pray as much as she could for the dying. By her prayers she was to obtain for them trust in His mercy, because they have most need of trust and have it the least. That is Diary 1777.

These are words of private revelation, received by the Church and given to the faithful as a treasured devotion. They are not a new article of the Creed. They do not replace Confession or the anointing. They tell us that Christ wishes to be present at the last hour as Saviour, and that He is willing to use this simple prayer as a way of covering a soul that can no longer do much for itself.

The Association does not add extra promises of its own. It tries to give those words a daily and particular use.

Reflection

At the end of life a person can no longer make many plans.

They cannot repair every relationship. They cannot finish every task. They may not even be able to speak. The Church has always known that this is the hour when mercy matters most, because the person can offer so little of their own strength.

The Chaplet does not pretend that the dying have earned a peaceful death. It offers the Passion of Christ when their own offering is almost finished.

That is why fear is the wrong way to read these promises. The point is not “pray or this soul is lost because of you.” The point is that Christ wants to stand as Saviour, and He allows us to ask Him.

A Short Prayer

Merciful Saviour, stand between the Father and those who are dying today. Give them trust when they have least of it. Amen.

Chapter 5

Why only one name



Why not send twenty names? Why not fifty?

Because one name allows a member to pray for one actual person.

Jesus did not give Faustina a list. He asked for help with a certain dying sinner. Sending one first name a day is an attempt to keep that shape. It is not a claim that God cannot hear prayers for many people. Of course He can. Parishes pray for lists of the sick every Sunday. That is good and right.

This Association chooses a different form. One name. One Chaplet. One day. The member is not being asked to manage a crowd. They are being asked to stay with Marie, or John, until the beads are finished.

There is also a reason of dignity. A first name is already more than a number. A long list can become a blur. One name remains a person.

Families who ask us to send a name do not owe the members a biography. The dying person does not owe us a story. Privacy is part of the work.

Reflection

We live among enormous numbers of tragedies.

A screen can show us twenty disasters before breakfast. The heart cannot hold twenty disasters. It either grows hard or it grows vague.

Praying for one name does not mean the other nineteen do not matter. It means I will actually pray for this one, instead of feeling briefly sad about all of them and doing nothing.

The Association asks for a small, exact kind of attention. That is harder than it looks, and more honest than a list we never finish.

A Short Prayer

Lord, teach us to stay with one person long enough to pray. Amen.

Chapter 6

Seven minutes, thought through



The Association asks for about seven minutes because that is roughly how long the Chaplet takes when it is said simply.

Seven minutes once is almost nothing. Seven minutes every day is a promise.

A small promise kept on an ordinary weekday can matter more than a large promise made in a moment of feeling and dropped after a week.

Members are not asked to become contemplatives. They are asked to keep a short, repeatable act of mercy. If they are at work when the name arrives, they pray as soon as they reasonably can. The point is not drama. The point is not to forget.

I do not say that seven minutes saves a soul by force. God saves. We pray. The time we give is ours. The mercy belongs to Him.

The shortness is a kindness to busy people. It is also a test. If I cannot give seven minutes, the problem is not the length of the Chaplet.

Reflection

We are better at beginning things than at keeping them.

A beautiful idea on a Sunday evening is easy. The same idea on an ordinary Tuesday in November is the real question. That is the day this work is meant for.

Faithfulness in small things is not glamorous. It is how most of the works of mercy actually survive. Someone keeps turning up. Someone keeps sending the name. Someone keeps taking the beads from a pocket.

If I only pray when I feel ready, the dying person will often be left waiting for a mood that never comes.

A Short Prayer

Lord, receive the seven minutes we can give, and keep us from despising a small promise that is kept. Amen.

Chapter 7

How the message arrives



The name arrives by text message in the United Kingdom, or by email or WhatsApp wherever a member lives. There is one message a day. There is no need to reply.

That last point surprises people. We are used to answering everything. Here the only answer required is the prayer.

If you are at work, you pray when you can. The instruction on our contact page is simple: as soon as possible. Not in a panic. Not three days later if you can help it.

The telephone is an ordinary object. It can waste an evening. It can also carry one first name into a kitchen. The object is neither holy nor unholy. What we do when it lights up is what matters.

I send the name from the parish. I do not add a sermon. The members already know what to do. The shortness of the message is deliberate. The dying person does not need our commentary. They need the Chaplet.

Reflection

The same device that distracts us for hours can also bring us the name of someone who needs prayer.

That is not a reason to treat the telephone as a sacred object. It is a reason to notice what we do with interruptions.

Some interruptions are noise. Some are a person. The Association turns one daily interruption into a work of mercy. The rest of the day's messages remain what they were.

It is worth asking, without drama, which alerts I treat as urgent and which I treat as optional. A first name from a stranger may deserve more attention than another piece of news I will forget by supper.

A Short Prayer

*Lord, when a name arrives in the middle of ordinary work, help us to pray
as soon as we can. Amen.*

Chapter 8

Many voices, one soul



At the time of writing, hundreds of members pray for the same person each day. The number will change. It is not the point.

One nun in a corridor was enough for the man Faustina saw. A crowd of members is not more powerful simply because it is a crowd. It is a way of making sure that the request does not depend on one tired priest having a free evening. When one member cannot pray at once, another already is.

The dying person will not know those voices. They may not know that anyone is praying. The Church has always believed that this kind of hidden help is real. The communion of saints is the whole Church united in Christ — those already with God, those being purified, and those still on earth. What members do each day is a small, visible part of that communion: people who have never met saying the same beads for the same first name.

There is a temptation to treat the number as a vote, as if mercy were decided by how many people joined. The Diary does not work that way. God does not wait for a certain number of members. The members wait on God.

Reflection

People who have never met can still belong to the same moment.

The dying person may know none of our names. We know almost nothing of theirs. And yet, for seven minutes, the same prayer is said in kitchens and cars and hospital corridors.

That is a picture of the Church that has nothing to do with meetings. It is communion at its simplest: one Lord, one prayer, one soul in need.

I do not need to feel the other members in order for the prayer to be shared. Feeling is not what makes it real. Saying the Chaplet is what makes it real.

A Short Prayer

Holy Spirit, join our scattered voices around the one who is afraid. Amen.

Chapter 9

A small church in South Wales



The Association began in a small Catholic parish. Canon Jason Jones and I established it because we took Faustina's page as a request that still needed a practical answer. I continue to coordinate the work from Our Lady of Margam, in the Archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia.

Eagiewniki is the great church of the Divine Mercy message. Margam is a parish with ordinary Masses and ordinary funerals. The Chaplet does not require a basilica. It requires someone who will keep sending the name, and people who will keep saying the prayer.

I also serve as a hospital chaplain. That work has taken me into ITU, and into rooms where a person is approaching death. I have stood beside people whose families were still travelling. I have been in a room where the person in the bed could no longer hold a sentence. Sometimes there is simply nobody there. Sometimes, because of the illness and the care they need, they are in a separate room, away from the activity of the ward. Behind a closed door a human being may be coming to the last moments of life while most of the world has no idea that it is happening.

In those hours I have wanted the Church to have more than my own voice. A priest can be present. The sacraments can be given when that is possible. Family can arrive, if there is time. None of that is replaced by a text message. And yet a first name can leave that quiet room and reach people in kitchens, cars, churches and workplaces. Members who have never met the dying person can stop for seven minutes and pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet for them.

The room may be physically quiet. The person may never know the names of those who are praying. The members may know nothing except a first name. Even so, that person does not have to be spiritually abandoned. The Church can still accompany them at the threshold of eternity. When I stand beside someone who is dying, or know that somebody is approaching death, my prayer does not have to be the only prayer surrounding them. Hundreds of ordinary Catholics can quietly accompany that one person.

That is why this work matters. Someone is dying. Perhaps somebody is alone. The Church can pray.

Reflection

Works of mercy do not have to begin in famous places.

An ordinary parish can start something useful and then keep doing it when the first excitement has gone. That is less impressive than a launch, and much more like the Gospel.

Most of the Church's help for the dying has always looked like this: a local priest, a few people who will pray, a habit that survives the people who first thought of it.

If I wait until I live near a great shrine before I do anything, I will wait a long time. Faustina entered a corridor in her own convent. A telephone in a Welsh parish is not a shrine. It is enough to begin.

A Short Prayer

Saint Faustina, pray for the parish that still sends the name, and for the priests who first helped to begin the work. Amen.

Chapter 10

If you are considering joining



If you are considering joining, the first thing I ask is that you think.

Can you give seven minutes every day, not only in the week when you feel fervent? Can you receive one message without needing to reply? Can you pray for a stranger whose only gift to you is a first name? If the answer is not yet, the honest response is to wait. If the answer is yes, the way in is on soschaplet.com, or through the parish of Our Lady of Margam.

Joining does not make you a better Catholic than the person who prays the Chaplet without a message. It only places your seven minutes inside a particular form: today, this name.

People sometimes ask whether they must be in Wales, or in the United Kingdom. The text message is limited to the United Kingdom. Email and WhatsApp are not. The dying person may be anywhere.

I have kept the joining information short on purpose. The Association does not need emotional promises that disappear after three days. A small faithful commitment is better.

Reflection

The seriousness of a small promise is easy to miss.

Saying yes because the idea feels beautiful today is not the same as saying yes because you can still give the seven minutes when the work has become ordinary.

The Church is full of good beginnings. It is poorer in kept minutes. If you join, join for the ordinary day. If you cannot see that day yet, you are allowed to wait.

A delayed yes is more useful than a quick yes that was never going to last.

A Short Prayer

Jesus, I trust in You with any yes I can keep, and with the honesty to wait if I cannot. Amen.

Chapter 11

If you cannot join



If you cannot join, you are not locked out of the request Jesus made.

You can say the Chaplet today for the dying whose names you will never receive. You can say it at three o'clock, or at the hour a hospital call usually comes. You can say it for the person on your own street who is slipping away without a priest. You can teach one other person the beads and then stop talking.

The Association is one way of answering the request. It is not the only way. The prayer does not belong to us. We only try to give it a simple daily form.

What the Association refuses to be is a substitute for the sacraments, or a performance of compassion on a screen. If your life cannot carry a daily message just now, carry the prayer when you can, and do not despise the day when you cannot. Faustina herself had days of illness when the work was smaller than she wanted. The Lord who asked for a certain sinner also knew the weight of a tired body.

Reflection

Not joining does not mean refusing mercy.

Some people cannot add another daily message to a life that is already full of care. That can be honest. Honesty is closer to mercy than a promise made to please a priest.

There are other doors: the Hour of Mercy, a Chaplet said for someone you already know, a call to a hospital chaplain, a quiet “Jesus, I trust in You” when you pass a ward.

The Association exists to serve the prayer. If joining is not possible for you, the prayer remains possible. That order keeps this work from becoming a club.

A Short Prayer

Mother of Mercy, hold those who cannot join, and those who pray without a message. Amen.

Chapter 12

The corridor and the telephone



There is an old Catholic instinct that the last hour is not private property. The commendation of the soul, the bells that once told a village someone was dying, the habit of asking the parish to pray — these were ways of saying that a Christian does not have to finish the journey alone.

The Association is a quiet, modern version of that instinct. No bell rings over the town. A name appears on a telephone. Hundreds of people take seven minutes and spend them on someone they will not meet. Then they go on with the washing.

Faustina lived in a different time. There were no smartphones. But the situation is surprisingly similar. She was going about ordinary duties. A request interrupted her day. She prayed for one particular dying person.

Today an ordinary person may be cooking, working or sitting on a bus. Their telephone shows a first name. Later they take their beads. They pray.

The technology has changed. The Christian act has not. Someone is dying. Someone should pray.

That is as close as many of us will come to her corridor. It is close enough. Tomorrow will have its own name.

Reflection

The last hour still asks for company.

Most of us will not be in the room. That used to mean we could do very little. A name on a telephone does not put us in the room. It does put us on our knees, or at the sink with beads in a pocket.

The old parish bell and the new message are trying to do the same thing. They tell the rest of us that this is not only the family's business. It is the Church's business.

If I remember only one thing from these pages, I want it to be the request, not the organisation. Help Me to save a certain dying sinner. The beads are already in the house.

A Short Prayer

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world. Amen.

A last word



If these pages have done their work, you will not remember a theory. You will remember a request.

Help Me to save a certain dying sinner.

You can answer that request this afternoon with beads you already own. You can also, if you are able to keep the minutes, let this small association send you one first name a day. Think first. Then, if you can, say yes.

If you decide to join us, your name will not be important to the dying person. You may never know anything about them except their first name. That is part of the work, and it is enough.

They will not thank you. They will not know your name. Most works of mercy look like that when they are real.

A prayer

Saint Faustina, secretary of mercy, pray for us. Our Lady of Mercy, pray for us. Jesus, I trust in You. Amen.

A word of thanks



The seven minutes in this book are free, as the Chaplet itself is free. Joining the Association is free. Nobody is asked to pay in order to pray for the dying.

If these pages have helped you, and if you are able to leave a small gift through Silent Homilies, it will be received with gratitude. It helps a small parish keep the wider pastoral work going. It also helps me to reach more people with the message of Divine Mercy. It is never a charge for the prayer.

Please do so only if you wish, and only if you can.

www.silenthomilies.com