

Hello,

My name is Cindy and this is my personal testimony to the power of Saint Sister Faustina and the graces bestowed by Jesus since following the gentle but absolute guidance given to me to start a Divine Mercy Cenacle.

At first, I simply felt myself being pulled to find someone with whom I could contemplate, pray and share the messages contained in Saint Faustina's Diary. I did not even know what a Cenacle was. I had never heard that word before. I came to know about cenacles in a roundabout manner but it was all God's doing, that I know for certain. This is how it happened back in November and December 2014...

Shortly before Christmas, my husband, David, was dying of ALS, commonly known as Lou Gehrig's Disease. The doctor consistently told us he had only a few weeks if not days left to live, but he was fighting it. Our living room had been converted to a hospital room for almost two years. David had been a vibrant, strong he-man kind of guy. He was voted Most Valuable Player on his high school football team. But ALS had reduced him to a shell of his former self depending on a machine to breathe and being increasingly unable to move. And he was enraged!! He didn't want to die. He was furious with God for doing this to him. So he continued to outlive the prognoses but the signs were evident that he could not fight the monster much longer. His anger filled our home. It was a very difficult time for our family. We still had two boys living there with us. They say that anger is taken out on the person who is closest to the situation. Well, that was me and I was finally at my wit's end. My patience had given way to complete helplessness.

A few weeks earlier, my sister in Australia had sent me a birthday gift. It was a booklet on Saint Faustina and her message of Divine Mercy. I had never heard of her. And in the business and turmoil in the house, I had set it aside. During that difficult time, I sought counselling. It just so happened that the man I met with had specialized in spiritual counselling, and he told me to read about Saint Maximilian Kolbe and embrace the power of redemptive suffering. He said it would bring many graces. He also told me to get Saint Faustina's Diary. So I did and I began reading it. It brought me to tears. I wanted to know what was driving Saint Faustina. I really wanted to know her. For some reason, I felt a strange kinship with her.

One Sunday morning before that last Christmas, I found myself on my knees praying to her. My husband had not spoken to me for three weeks at that point. I got up and I actually felt her presence with me as I

slowly walked down the hall and went to him, knelt before him and begged him to open himself to God as his time was near. I said "God is on the other side of the veil and he is waiting, he's right there!" I sobbed as I told him I was so worried about the state of his soul. His anger turned to tears and they mixed with mine. Amazingly, he agreed right then to let me invite our parish priest from Good Shepherd to our home to pray with him and to give him Last Rites. He also agreed to let me have a funeral mass for him. This was a huge shift as he had turned away from God. I also placed a small prayer card with Saint Faustina's picture on it close to his bed and he asked me about her. He asked if she was a nun. I told him yes, she had been, and she had died while she was still young in Poland. I said she was looking after him and he nodded. The morning he passed in January, our priest came and with family and friends gathered around, we prayed a decade of the Divine Mercy Chaplet over his body. It felt so comforting and just so right to do that.

After he passed, I kept having interior thoughts that I needed to find someone to share the Diary with and I spoke to my priest. I was led to come back here to Divine Infant, our former parish, and I found out about the perpetual adoration chapel at St. Margaret Mary's. While I was there one day in the spring, I spoke to the coordinator, Marlene Holt who I happened to have known years ago, and she told me about Stan Siok. She said I should start a cenacle and she told me a little of what it was. I had a strong notion that I needed to start a joint cenacle to honour Saint Faustina who had responded to my prayer to come to me when she was so needed and to bring the parishes together.

I contacted Stan and together, he and I put a plan in place which we presented to Father Waldemar in the fall. It also happened to be the start of the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. With Father's help and guidance, the cenacle here at Divine Infant met for the first time with twenty people present on the eve of the first anniversary of my husband's death. It was an unbelievable blessing and gift to dear Saint Faustina.

The blessings have continued. Our cenacle number quickly grew to a solid twenty five and it was large enough to form three separate cenacles. They are named in honour of Saint Faustina, Saint Maximilian Kolbe and Saint John Paul II. We meet every Monday evening after mass to sing, read the Diary, Scripture and the Catechism. We discuss how to apply mercy in our everyday lives with our family, co-workers, strangers and one other. We pray the Chaplet for each other and those particularly in need.

We have now reached Week 50 in our cenacle journey together. Praying for each other has manifested in wonderful graces for every member. We have become a close knit Christian family of brothers and

sisters devoted to, and united in, God's unfathomable mercy. Today, as we did last year on Divine Mercy Sunday, we will consecrate ourselves once again to merciful love. We share a true bond of love for each other and would do anything, anytime, to support one another. It has brought us immense comfort and joy. It is like nothing else and we all so look forward to being together every week and in fact, every chance we get.

The graces bestowed on our cenacle have been many. Prayers have been answered. Small miracles have been experienced. The Holy Spirit has enabled us to blossom with many personal gifts. We now have a wonderful music ministry, a state of the art website, personal blogs that are deeply spiritual and moving, an ordained deacon, another brother preparing for the diaconate, a personalized novena, opportunities given to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet at the deathbed of loved ones, and recently a project to design, produce and install these two incredible banners now gracing the altar. All these things have been done with incredible love for our blessed Mother and the desire to honour her son, our Merciful Jesus.

The cenacle was tested very recently. Our treasured brother Jim, one of our leaders, passed away suddenly and tragically the morning of April 12<sup>th</sup>. The last day of Lent. Immediately, within minutes, we came together as a family to support his wife/our sister Gerry and their children. Although we grieve his passing, Jim was full of grace and we are confident that he is blissfully enfolded in the compassionate heart of Jesus. His wonderful presence will continue to be felt, his gentle smile will always be remembered, and we know that he will help guide us in our continued cenacle journey. The cenacle he loved so much.

There is more work to be done to spread God's mercy to this hurting world. Every day we have the opportunity and the duty to do corporal and spiritual acts of mercy. That is something for each of us, whether we are part of a cenacle or not, to take seriously. For my part, I have been asked to start cenacles in Washington, DC, in Ghana, and in my hometown of Otter Lake, Quebec. Time will tell where God leads me. First though, closest to home, I will work with my brothers and sisters to have a full complement of Divine Mercy resources in our parish lending library, and I will fulfill the interior voice that called to me at the beginning of this journey to help build the joint Divine Infant / Good Shepherd cenacle.

I will close with a quote from our dear Saint Faustina's Diary - entry 729. It encapsulates what I feel. What I believe all my cenacle brothers and sisters feel. It reads: I recognized the purpose and destiny of

my life. My purpose is to become closely united to God through love, and my destiny is to praise and glorify God's mercy.

Thank you, Father Waldemar, for giving me the opportunity to share this today. God bless us all.

Jesus I trust in You. Jesus I trust in You. Jesus I trust in You.

Divine Mercy Sunday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017