

## **Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy in Hawaii**

The Spirit of Mercy is moving fast in the Hawaiian Islands where the message of Divine Mercy is still unknown in many areas or misunderstood by some people. There are still many Catholics in Hawaii who have not heard about the apparitions of Jesus as The Divine Mercy to Saint Faustina Kowalska of Poland. After all, Hawaii is several thousand miles away from the place where the devotion and the messages originated. But at the beginning of the new millennium when in April 2000, Pope John Paul II canonized Sister Faustina (the Secretary and Apostle of God's Mercy), and established the Feast of Divine Mercy Sunday in the Church, the spark of mercy swiftly reached the chain of small islands located in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. And through the worldwide missionary efforts of the Eucharistic Apostles of The Divine Mercy (EADM), the task of educating the people of Hawaii in regards to the importance of this devotion is definitely being accomplished.

The apostolate of EADM functioning in the Diocese of Honolulu (which includes all parishes in the islands of Oahu, Kauai, Maui, Molokai, Lanai and Hawaii or commonly known as the Big Island) is quickly responding to the call of spreading the urgent messages of Divine Mercy. Misconceptions about the devotion hamper the acceptance of God's grace and protection that are so needed especially in the turbulent times that we live in. For the few who have heard about the devotion, they say that they know all there is to know about Divine Mercy – the image, the Chaplet, the novena, the 3 o'clock prayer, etc. Then you hear some say that it is just a private revelation or just another devotion and we don't need anymore. But when one studies (under the guidance of the Church experts) the messages of Jesus given to St. Faustina, one will be moved with awe as to the immense love that God has for all of us. Divine Mercy is a gift for our times... it is a way of life.

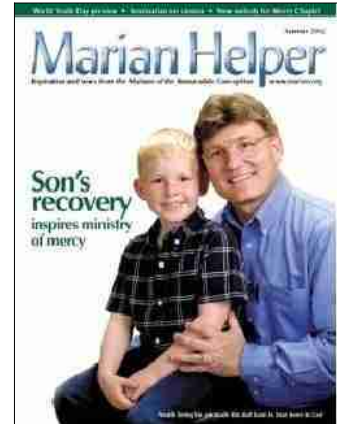
EADM Hawaii's prayer is that many in the islands will embrace this gift of Mercy that God is giving us generously to help us in our daily lives. We believe that this can happen only when we submit our will to the Lord with humility and trust in His Divine Providence. And with the intercession of the Diocese of Honolulu patrons (the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title of *Malia Ka Malu* or *Our Lady, Queen of Peace* and Hawaii's great apostles of mercy, Blessed Father Damien and Blessed Mother Marianne Cope of Molokai) and St. Faustina, the flame of God's mercy will surely put the hearts of the island people ablaze with the fire of love, with true Aloha.

### **2003 - The Beginning of EADM Hawaii**

Thinking that the call to start an EADM cenacle in Hawaii was not for me, I struggled and hesitated at first to pay attention to persistent promptings to form a prayer group. After all, I was already "superbusy" and overwhelmed as a mother of three who has a full-time job as a computer programmer/analyst and also a coordinator for Religious Education and Youth Ministry in our parish. But I still tried to do something about these promptings despite my busy schedule. I visited the website of EADM headquarters in Florida at that time and asked if there was a cenacle in Hawaii where I could just join. Mrs. Gretchen Robens, the Cenacle Development leader at that time encouraged me to start one instead. With my workload, I told her I would pray about it. And so I did. On the night of July 10, 2003 during my

adoration hour, I asked the Lord if this was His Will for me and asked for a sign. As soon as I said that, I heard the words *“Pick up the magazine on your way home.”* I thought I was praying too hard so I ignored it. But I was reminded three times while doing my novena.

When I was about to leave the chapel, I stopped by the sign-in table and there was a Marian Helper magazine and featured on the cover was Dr. Bryan Thatcher (Founder and Director of EADM) with his son John Paul. I picked it up and my fingers opened it to page 12 right away. And the title of the article that caught my attention? **“How to start and grow a cenacle”**. Pictured in that page was Gretchen Robens with some of her fellow cenacle members. At that very moment, I knew I got my sign. After receiving this confirmation from Our Lord Jesus, I proceeded with the formation of the EADM Hawaii Cenacle. I knew that I had to obey God and trust on the guidance and assistance of The Merciful Savior and the Mother of Mercy.



We had our first EADM formation meeting in August and about 20 people from different parishes attended. After hearing the presentation and viewing the video *“I am a Voice Crying for Mercy”*, the people were convinced that this was the cenacle that they have been wanting to join. Many of those who attended the meeting were familiar with the Divine Mercy apparitions and knew about the Chaplet and the Feast of the Divine Mercy. But many did not know that Divine Mercy is a way of life. Aside from weekly prayers, study of scriptures, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Diary of St. Faustina and the encyclical of Pope John Paul II on Mercy, we all felt that being involved in corporal and spiritual works of mercy will help us to live our baptismal promises to proclaim the love of God and become vessels of His Mercy. Everybody agreed that fellowship is an important element of community growth and interaction. So we decided to have our prayer and study meetings every week and dedicate one Saturday of each month for potluck dinner fellowship.

A leader of a Divine Mercy prayer study group in one of the parishes in Downtown Honolulu decided to join and adopt the EADM cenacle format. So a few of us began meeting every week and committed to studying the teachings on the Mercy of God. But bold as it may sound, towards the end of 2003, we were talking about organizing a Divine Mercy Conference for the following year. I thought that by organizing one where we could invite guest speakers who are experts in the subject of Divine Mercy, more people would be interested in forming Divine Mercy cenacles. I got excited at the thought that by having a conference, many more people would be able to learn about the messages of Divine Mercy. So I ignored our limitations – we did not have any budget, skills and even time to organize a conference – but we planned on having this event anyway solely TRUSTING on God's Divine Providence. In December, we met with the Honolulu Diocese Vicar General, Fr. Joe Grimaldi, who acted on behalf of the bishop who was transitioning into another diocese. We introduced ourselves, presented our missions and expressed our desire to invite expert guest speakers and organize a conference. EADM Hawaii received blessings and recognition from the Diocese of Honolulu by way of a letter from the Vicar General.

## **The Mission of EADM Hawaii**

During early 2004, the EADM cenacle in Hawaii had the strong desire to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Divine Mercy devotion to Catholics in all the islands. Although most of the members (who come from different parishes in the main island of Oahu) were already involved in some form of corporal works of mercy, the group felt that the cenacle should engage in the spiritual works of mercy of “instructing the uninformed”. Members who were personally involved in the prison ministry, hospital and homebound ministry, etc. decided that the cenacle should provide at least basic information regarding the Divine Mercy devotion to as many people in Hawaii. At this point, we began to define the mission of the apostolate: *“EADM Hawaii hopes to establish many cenacles throughout the Hawaiian Islands, in order to spread the Divine Mercy Message and Devotion and to proclaim the truth of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist. By organizing spiritual events such as Days of Reflection, Divine Mercy Conferences, Weekend Retreats, Healing Services, and Divine Mercy Crusades, EADM Hawaii will be able to perform spiritual works of mercy by praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet especially for the sick and dying and by instructing the faithful with the teachings of the Church as presented by expert clergymen, religious and lay people.”*