

The three o'clock prayer

We may associate fixed-hour prayer with the Muslims, but it is also rooted in the tradition of the Jews and the early Catholic Church. Acts 3:1 says, "Now Peter and John were going up to the temple area for the three o'clock hour of prayer."

And we have a clear message from Jesus that He wants us to ask for His mercy, to whatever degree we can, at a certain time. In the 1930s, a nun in Poland, Mary Faustina Kowalska received messages from our Lord that she was told to spread to the world. She was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 2000. Saint Faustina recorded in her diary that Jesus asked for prayers at three o'clock in the afternoon, the moment of His death upon the cross:

At three o'clock, implore My Mercy, especially for sinners, and if only for a brief moment, immerse yourself in My Passion, particularly in My abandonment at the moment of agony. This is the hour of great mercy for the whole world. I will allow you to enter into My mortal sorrow. In this hour, I will refuse nothing to the soul that makes a request of Me in virtue of My Passion...

I remind you, My daughter, that as often as you hear the clock strike the third hour, immerse yourself completely in My mercy, adoring and glorifying it; invoke its omnipotence for the whole world and particularly for poor sinners, for at that moment mercy was opened wide for every soul. (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*)

The prayer is as follows:

You expired, Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls
and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world.

O Fountain of Life, unfathomable Divine Mercy,
envelop the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us.

O Blood and Water which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus
as a fountain of mercy for us, I trust in You.

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on
us and on the whole world. [Repeat three times.]

Jesus, King of mercy, I trust in You! Amen.