

Prayer of St. Faustina

Divine Mercy, in which we are all immersed, I trust in You.

Divine Mercy, sweet relief for anguished hearts, I trust in You.

Divine Mercy, only hope of despairing souls, I trust in You.

Divine Mercy, repose of hearts, peace amidst fear, I trust in You.

Divine Mercy, delight and ecstasy of holy souls, I trust in You.

Divine Mercy, inspiring hope against all hope, I trust in You.

Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of compassion inexhaustible, look kindly upon us and increase Your mercy in us, that in all difficult moments we might not despair nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to Your holy will, which is Love and Mercy itself.

Jesus I trust in you

Divine Mercy Image, given to St. Faustina by our Lord on 2/22/31.
"I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I myself will defend it as My own glory."

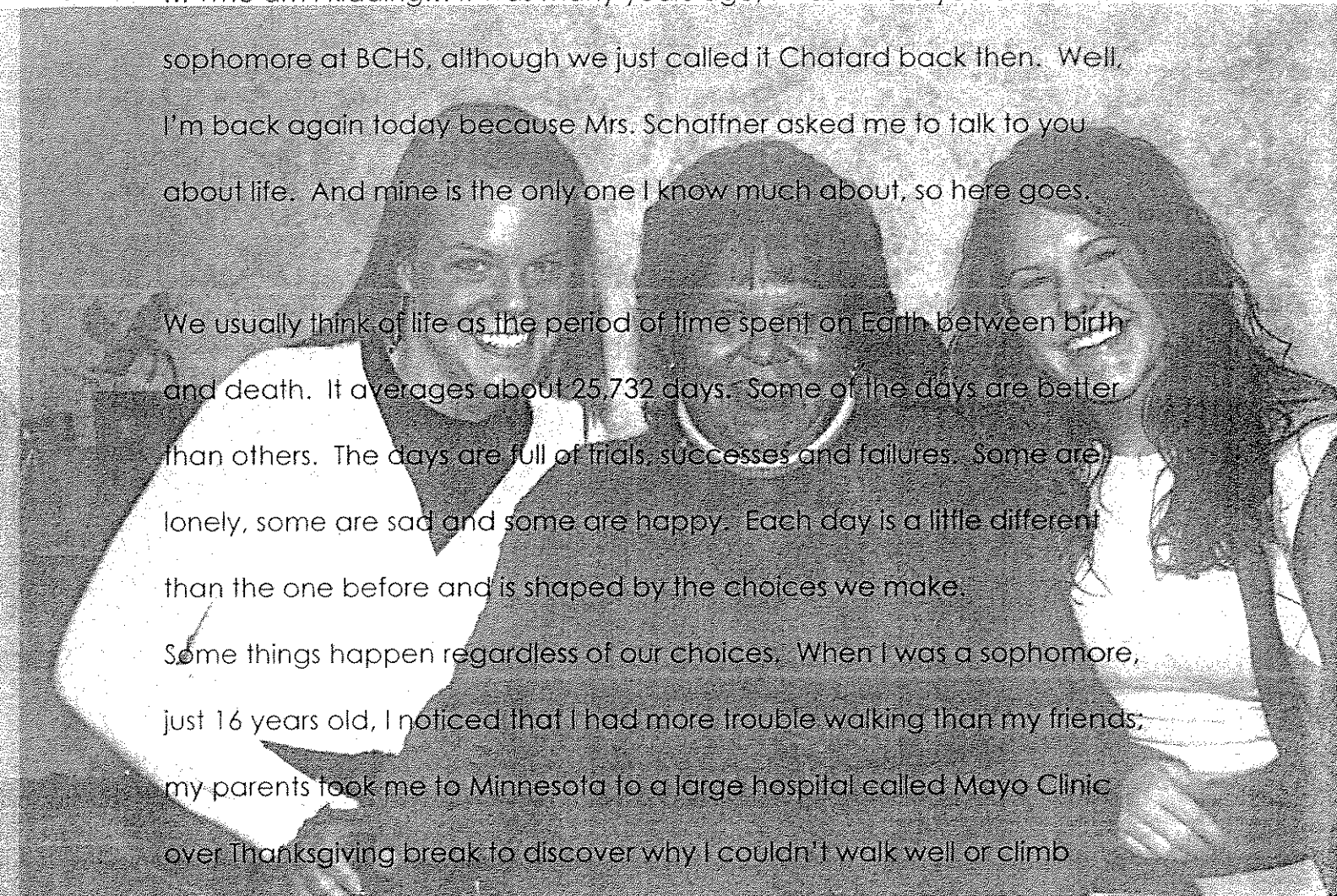
This speech was written by Debby McCalley for a Bishop Chatard sophomore retreat:

Good morning. My name is Debby McCalley. Not too many years ago, ... who am I kidding... it was many years ago, I was where you are a sophomore at BCHS, although we just called it Chatard back then. Well, I'm back again today because Mrs. Schaffner asked me to talk to you about life. And mine is the only one I know much about, so here goes.

We usually think of life as the period of time spent on Earth between birth and death. It averages about 25,732 days. Some of the days are better than others. The days are full of trials, successes and failures. Some are lonely, some are sad and some are happy. Each day is a little different than the one before and is shaped by the choices we make.

Some things happen regardless of our choices. When I was a sophomore, just 16 years old, I noticed that I had more trouble walking than my friends; my parents took me to Minnesota to a large hospital called Mayo Clinic over Thanksgiving break to discover why I couldn't walk well or climb

stairs. I found out I had a degenerative muscle disease called Muscular Dystrophy. With MD the muscle in your body turns to fat and dies. That means that anything you use your muscles for is something that I would be unable to do in the future. Walking, running, climbing, standing, raising



my arms, clapping my hands, lifting, writing, sitting upright, swallowing, breathing, everything uses muscle –even the heart is a muscle. At 16, my future was to be in a wheelchair until I was unable to sit up any longer and then permanently bound to a bed. Imagine how I felt. I always wanted to be a little different than everyone else; you know a little special... But not this different!!! How would you feel if when you got home tonight your parents told you that you had an incurable disease that wouldn't kill you, it would just make the next 60 years of your life painful, frustrating and virtually unbearable? I asked God why, what had I done to deserve this and asked him to take it away. If he answered, I didn't hear it. I couldn't believe that the one life I had been given would be lived as a crippled up person. How could a life like that be worthwhile? What good would I be to anyone? I didn't understand why but I knew that a God who could do that to me wasn't a God I wanted anything to do with.

As the years passed I did the best I could. I graduated from BCHS and went to college at Butler. The doctors didn't think it would be a good idea for me to endure the stress of college but I went anyway. About my sophomore year in college my disease worsened significantly and because I was at a loss about what to do, once again I asked God to take this disease away. I was persistent in my prayers but after about a

week I decided God wasn't listening and didn't care about me. I decided I had to somehow deal with this without God.

Life continued, I got married, had two kids and began another phase of my life. Just after Katie was born, my husband decided to leave and get a divorce. Part of the reason he left was because it was too difficult to deal with the effects of this degenerative disease. Once again, this disease was ruining my life. At this point though I realized that it wasn't about me any longer. I had 2 small children to raise ... it was about them. I tried God one more time but this time instead of asking him to take this disease away I asked him for the strength to endure it for the girls' sake. That was it. God helped me. He wasn't going to take this disease away but he was going to help me deal with it. I'd been praying the wrong prayer all these years. I wanted it my way, I wanted the disease gone so instead of submitting to God's will and asking for his help to use the disease for good, I was telling him to fix it my way. How stupid was I? Who did I think I was putting my own desires before God's universal plan? I felt a little better when I remembered that even Jesus in the garden of

Gethsemane asked God to remove his sentence to be hung on the cross.

Of course for him it only took a second to submit to God's will when in his next breath he said THY WILL BE DONE and it took me half a lifetime, but I finally got there. God's will for me was to be handicapped and like it or

not that's how it would be. The choice of how to handle it though was mine.

With God's help, my outlook changed almost immediately and I began reading all I could about God, his will, and his promises. It seems I wasn't worthless after all and God did have a plan for me. I was concentrating so hard on the negative parts of being handicapped, I completely overlooked the positives. Besides good parking spaces and great seats at the Hoosier Dome, I get to see God work through me to help countless numbers of people with their own struggles.

Well you may say, "yeah but what about you in a wheelchair all of the time and missing out on some of the best parts of life?" Be assured God did not forget me or any of us for that matter. Over the years we've heard the phrases "life after death" and "everlasting life" and "living with God for all eternity". I got the general idea that when we died there was supposed to be something more but the details were a little foggy. So I decided to look into the eternal paradise God promised, to find out what it would be like and how I would get there.

The truth is that we control where we go after we die. God offered us a gift of eternal salvation provided that we "confess with our mouths that,

'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead, we will be saved." Romans 10:9

This means that although we live in this world for a certain number of years, we have the opportunity to spend all of eternity in paradise. A place where according to the Bible:

- We will live with the Lord ... in person (Revelation 21:3).
- There will be pleasures forevermore (Psalm 16:11).
- Everyone will be physically whole in every way. The deaf will hear, the blind will see, and the lame will be able to run (Isaiah 35:5, 6; Philippians 3:21).
- There will be no more death, pain, tears, sorrow, sickness, tragedy, disappointment, hunger, or thirst (Revelation 21:4; Isaiah 33:24; Revelation 22:3; Isaiah 65:23; Revelation 7:16).
- Jealousy, fear, hatred, falsehood, envy, impurity, cynicism, filth, worry, and all evil will be forever gone (Revelation 21:8, 27; 22:15).
- Vast seas as we know them today will be gone (Revelation 21:1). The whole world will be one huge garden of unsurpassed beauty, interspersed with lakes, rivers, and mountains (Revelation 22:1; Acts 3:20, 21).
- The animals will all be tame. None will prey upon others, and a little child will lead them (Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:25).
- There will be no more violence of any kind (Isaiah 60:18)

- Righteous loved ones who have died will be raised to join the righteous living in God's kingdom (Isaiah 26:19; Jeremiah 31:15-17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-55; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
- People will know each other, just as people recognize each other on the earth today.
- We will build houses, and inhabit them; and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. (Isaiah 65:21, 22).
- We will sing and play heavenly music (Isaiah 35:10; 51:11; Psalm 87:7; Revelation 14:2, 3).
- We will Worship before God's Throne every Sabbath (Isaiah 66:22, 23).
- We will enjoy never-fading flowers and trees (Ezekiel 47:12; Isaiah 35:1, 2).
- We will Visit with loved ones, patriarchs, prophets, etc. (Matthew 8:11; Revelation 7:9).
- We will study the animals of heaven (Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:25).
- We will travel and explore without ever becoming weary (Isaiah 40:31).
- We will listen to God sing (Zephaniah 3:17).
- We will realize our fondest ambitions (Psalm 37:3, 4; Isaiah 65:24).

Heaven will be far more glorious and rewarding than anything we can possibly imagine. "Not even in its wildest dreams can the heart of man begin to comprehend the marvels of God's eternal kingdom. All that Adam lost will be restored" (Acts 3:20, 21).

That's what God has planned for us. So the story of life doesn't end with death it just changes with death. Life becomes better after death. And it seems that the story of my life that Mrs. Schaffner asked me to talk about with you is far from over regardless of when I leave this earth. So when you think about your life...

- think about following God's will rather than your own,
- think about turning to God rather than to drugs or alcohol in your times of need,
- think about where you want to be for eternity and make the right choices to get there

Because I want to see you all in paradise and show you all how well I can run. Thank you.

