

Divine Mercy Sunday

My beloved brothers and sisters, on April 30th of 2000, Pope John Paul the Great instituted the Feast of the Divine Mercy for the Universal Church, on the Sunday following Easter Sunday. He had been devoted to this Mystery throughout his life, and wanted to bring this Feast Day to the whole world, In order to honor and commemorate God's infinite Mercy for Mankind! But why on this particular Sunday”?

In the Gospel for today, the Apostles and the disciples of Jesus had all run away from Him in His hour of greatest need. They were terrified that what had happened to Jesus, was going to happen to them; and so they had locked themselves into the upper room, no doubt, to sneak out town when the clamor had grown dim. And suddenly, Jesus was standing there in their midst. The first words from the mouth of the Risen Lord were: “Peace be with you.”, and then He breathed upon them and said: “Whose sins you forgive are forgiven; whose sins your retain are retained!”, giving them His own Divine power of mercy and forgiveness. However, there is much more to this story:

Jesus had made a promise to them: “Behold, I will be with you all days, even to the end of the world...” He had prayed for them at the Last Supper, for their unity, and that they would be one with Him and the Father. Jesus had not only not abandoned them; but, was now empowering those who had run from Him with His own Divine Mission, the Mission of Mercy! Jesus passed through their fears, their regrets, their guilt, and stands with them. He had not given up on them. Instead, He affirms His Shalom for them, the Peace that only God can give, and tells them: “As the Father has sent me, so I have sent you!” But they are sent with the specific mission of reconciling men and women to the Father through Him!

Jesus does not crush them- He does not crush the sinner! Rather, He sends them into this sinful world after showing them His terrible wounds, now wounds of shining glory! They remain open for all time, as a Divine Witness that the Heart of God in Jesus remains open to all who will come to Him with their sins, seeking His pardon and peace and absolution! He reaffirms to the Apostles and Disciples

who betrayed Him, to the whole world who has continually rejected Him, and crucified the Lord of Infinite Love, that they can be redeemed, that our God has not condemned us, but for those who believe, those who turn to Him, He has come for our salvation, our healing, and to love us into the intimate relationship that He Himself has with the Father! When He empowers them and their successors, the Bishops and Priests who have succeeded them to forgive sins in His name, by the power of the Holy Spirit, He continues His infinite Divine Mercy and love for us throughout time, until He comes again in His mercy. However, there is a catch: God is ready to pour out His limitless mercy upon us, the infinite ocean of His love and mercy upon us, again and again; however, I must be willing to constantly repent of my sins, and turn to Him and allow this Infinite ocean of mercy to drown me, like a tiny grain of sand tossed into the ocean. How do we do this:

First, Ask for God's mercy constantly, and ask especially through the Sacrament of the Divine Mercy in the Sacrament of Confession; which Jesus Himself gave us!

Secondly, be merciful to others. Forgive those who have hurt you, by willing it through His Mercy. It has nothing to do with your feelings, it has to do with an act of the will, empowered by Divine Grace! As for the Grace, and immediately exercise it! And, be kind and generous to others, even in the smallest of ways, show deeds of mercy! In other words, love your neighbor as God loves you, without measuring love, not by doing good things because others deserve it, but in order to follow Jesus!

Thirdly, put your complete trust in Jesus's and His infinite capacity to love you, indeed, even the greatest of sinners, and let Jesus make of you an ambassador of His Mercy for others! Remember, when the Apostles and disciples had betrayed Him and run away from Him, the only one who did not receive His mercy, was Judas, who would not allow Him to be merciful to him! Whenever you feel too broken or little, too ashamed, too sinful to receive His mercy, or to be merciful, then do what Jesus asked of St. Faustina: go to His image and say to Him: "Jesus, King of Mercy, I trust in you!"