

## HOM 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Easter Divine Mercy 2024 B April 7

This Second Sunday of Easter was declared *Divine Mercy Sunday* by Pope St. John-Paul II in 2000. This was in response to Our Lord's request for this in a private revelation to St. Faustina, as recorded in her Diary.

Divine Mercy is something very specific and profoundly spiritual and also concrete and practical. It is, first of all, God's restoration of the Holy Spirit to Man by way of the sacraments, beginning with Baptism and reaching its fullness in the gift of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

The original grace of the Holy Spirit given to Man in Adam and Eve was, of course, lost with their original sin. This left all of their descendants – you and I, and all of humanity – bereft of this grace and thus rightly separated from God FOREVER like the angels who had rebelled. The fallen angels were fully aware of the consequences of their refusal to serve God. NON SERVIUM! “*I will not serve*” was their response to God's love and His will. Adam and Eve, too, knew in advance that their own disobedience – i.e., to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, would mean alienation from God -- eternal DEATH --- because God had clearly told them so.

Like the angels, made in the image of God, and endowed with the Holy Spirit, Man, too, was meant to live in perpetual oneness with God. Unlike the angels, however, who are pure spirits living in and subject to the eternal realm, Man is a creature of the physical realm, subject to time, with the possibility of retuning to God, but without the means – the grace of the Holy Spirit -- to do so after the Sin of Adam and Eve.

Man's miserable plight, however, evokes from the depths of God's being, merciful love – Divine Mercy - - that would be poured forth from the heart of God to Man, without negating the justice that man must still face. According to His eternal plan God was willing to do this IF there was even one person on earth willing to reciprocate His offer – just one person who would accept God's merciful love and extend Divine Mercy to others.

God found that person in Mary whom He endowed with the Holy Spirit from the first instant of her life inside her mother – her Immaculate Conception. When she came of age, God proposed to her the part she would have in His plan of salvation for Man. Mary was to be the Mother of God's Son and of all those who would be united to Jesus in doing the Father's will. Her deliberate, free, unconditional YES to God's love and His will opened the way for God's Son to take on Flesh and become like us in all things but sin. By His obedience to the Father's will unto the Cross and Resurrection, Jesus then not only poured out the Holy Spirit upon all the willing by way of Baptism, He also offered them consummate, nuptial oneness with Himself unto the Cross of obedience and love, and then Resurrection unto the Father's House, by way of the sacrament of His Body and Blood.

Those who accepted this gift of Divine Mercy were also to extend Divine Mercy to others by offering themselves FOR the true good others – for their sanctification and salvation – and TO them – in concrete works of mercy: feeding the hungry, caring for the afflicted, welcoming innocent strangers. By this they would communicate the grace of the Holy Spirit to many – beginning with loved ones -- and draw them into Christ's saving oblation – His gift of Divine Mercy.

Brothers and sisters, Divine Mercy Sunday is meant to promote all this, and the Lord has even provided some incentives for doing so. Through His Secretary of Divine Mercy, St. Faustina, the Lord has promised a **special grace** to those who make a good confession before worthily receiving Holy Communion today. That special grace is not only the complete forgiveness of all sins, but also the remission or taking away of all punishment that is due for those sins. In other words, it's like our Baptism

put into full effect all over again. Neither perfect contrition for sins nor perfect love for God are necessary for this special grace, only a desire and disposition of readiness to receive it.

There is also another incentive that comes to us through the authority Jesus gave to His Church. It is a **plenary indulgence** that is given by the Church to those who worthily receive Holy Communion today and make a good confession within a week before or after, offer prayers for the Pope's intentions, have no attachment whatsoever to sin, AND participate in public devotions to the Divine Mercy on Divine Mercy Sunday. Such devotions will take place with Bishop Kulick today at 3:00 PM at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral. I will be there and I hope you will also.

Remember that a plenary indulgence takes away all punishment due to sin and it can be applied to oneself or to someone in Purgatory. (The special grace I just explained to you cannot be applied to someone in Purgatory or to anyone except oneself.)

To have no attachment to sin, however, is quite challenging. It means to truly WANT – not necessarily to have achieved, but to WANT -- to do and to accept God's will in all things, no matter what it is. In effect, it is perfect love for God, wanting to please Him in everything, whatever the cost, knowing that this is for our true good, the true good of others – especially family and friends – and that it glorifies God and brings us and others to share His Divine glory.

In order to express all this, I would recommend the Blessed Mother's Prayer of Consent: "*Lord, let it be done to me according to your Word.*" This is a perfect way of inviting God to conform us to His Son who was sinless because He always did the Father's will. If we truly WANT this for ourselves and through us for others, then in effect, we have no attachment to sin or to self-willfulness, and this condition for a plenary indulgence is in place.

Our Eucharistic Self-Offering Prayer is another way of expressing this: I AM ALL YOURS O MOST LOVING JESUS THROUGH MARY YOUR MOTHER WITH THE HELP OF ST. JOSEPH. It adds, however, an implicit petition to, and consent for, *Mary and Joseph* to do whatever it takes to accomplish this in us. And so, with our Eucharistic Self-Offering and this petition and consent, renewed again and again with each Holy Communion, we can be sure that IT WILL BE DONE to us, as it was to them, for others, especially those we hold dear