

Divine Mercy Sunday 2020 (A)

Dear fellow stewards of the Co-Cathedral of St. Theresa Church,

Greetings to you with the Peace of the Risen Lord, may his Peace dwell in your heart!

Today is Divine Mercy Sunday. We remember what Jesus said to St. Faustina Kowalska, the Apostle of Divine Mercy, written in her diary, "Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the fount of My mercy." This message reminds us that the source and medicine of our troubled times is the Mercy of God. It is profoundly meaningful that the second Sunday of Easter is dedicated to the Divine Mercy.

This mercy is not about emotion or feeling sorry for others. In his encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* (November 30, 1980), the late St. Pope John Paul II explained that Divine Mercy is the ultimate manifestation of God's love in a history injured by sin. The word mercy refers back to the Latin vocabulary *misericordia*, which is composed of two words, "miseri" that relates to suffering, and "cordia," heart. We understand mercy to have a heart for those who suffer or to have a heart willing to suffer for others. It is but fitting to say that God places our sinful condition unto the heart of Jesus, the font of mercy. Jesus showed incredible mercy in forgiving Peter's threefold denial, Thomas for his doubts, and the apostles who abandoned him. And during his dying moment on the Cross, he forgave his executioners and all whose sins caused his suffering and death. His mercy gives us his peace.

When our risen Lord appeared to his terrified disciples, his greeting was, "Peace be with you." This is not just an ordinary greeting, and it is the GIFT of the risen Lord. It is a gift of his undying and sacrificial love. It is from the fount of his incredible mercy. We notice, after saying the greeting of peace, Jesus showed them the wounds of his hands and his side. And during his subsequent appearance to his disciples, he invited the doubting Thomas to put his hands into his wounds. Of course, this gives us the idea that the risen Lord is the same person who was crucified, and tells us that the risen life does not eliminate wounds but instead transforms them. We heard Thomas responded with two-fold acclamation of faith: "My Lord and my God!" (Jn. 20:19).

We can discern that the wounds of our Lord Jesus remind us that his response to cruelty, hatred, betrayal, neglect was mercy. He did not wound others even if he is wounded in the process. He ends cruelty, hate, betrayal, indifference on the Cross. We are made to realize that the wounds of Christ are not just reminders of His brutal death on the Cross. They are wounds of Divine Mercy from which comes forth peace.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, in his writing "*Deus Caritas Est*," said, the Mercy of God is his capacity to go against his justice to spare the one he loves. This is profoundly beautiful! If God is strict about his judgment, all of us will have lots and lots of wounds. That's what we all deserve. But the Mercy of God is this: instead of inflicting injuries on others, mercy prevails, instead of revenge, forgiveness. This is mercy that truly gives PEACE.

We know that if we are the ones needed to be understood or if we are the ones who required his mercy, it is easy to understand God's mercy. But if we are the ones to give mercy, this is where we have difficulty. Yes, it is difficult, but the Risen Lord helps our struggle. He pours unto us his peace. We are told that Jesus breathed unto the disciples the Holy Spirit. It is his intimate gift. By breathing, he enters into their personal space and renews their lives. The Letter of Peter proclaims this, that "God, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pt. 1:3).

This is also true to us being baptized Christian. Jesus enters into our personal space so intimately. And so we are to draw close enough to feel his breath, to breathe his breath as in our adoration (*ad oratio*) before the Blessed Sacrament. We are to realize that our Easter celebration is a celebration that we are made new that we are forgiven. You and I are given a new heart. You and I are given the peace of Christ.

Let us entrust ourselves into the heart of the Divine Mercy. Let us find our peace in God, and to make peace with him by seeking forgiveness of our sins. And let us live his Mercy with gratitude by imitating his love and forgiveness, praying that all in our sinful world will surrender to His Mercy, and to creatively putting into action the corporal and spiritual works of mercy during our challenging times.

Be safe and stay healthy!

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