**“Divine Mercy”**

Today, is a special day set aside as Divine Mercy Sunday. In 1931 before the beginning of World War II, there was a beautiful intercession by Jesus. Jesus showed Sr. Faustina who was born in 1905 the image of divine mercy and told her that it would be one of the vehicle of grace coming into the world. He told her that mankind’s last hope of salvation is, His divine mercy and that if we do not pass through the door of His mercy we will pass through the door of His justice. Jesus gave the world the image of divine mercy similar to the painting hanging on our wall with a large heart with 2 rays of mercy coming out. The white ray represents our baptism and the red, represents the Eucharist.

St. Faustina died in 1938. In about one year later, World War II started in 1939 as a chastisement God allowed for the sins of the world. God was calling us back to follow His ways. However, Jesus, first gave us His mercy eight years earlier before the war. It was said that when Sr. Faustina would receive visitation from Jesus, a very bright light brighter than any lamp ever seen, would be seen by nuns in her convent. The light would seep through under her door. In her private revelation, which we do not have to believe, she received, a message that there would be spark that would start in Poland which would prepare the world for the final coming of Jesus.

In her dairy, entry 83, Jesus said before He comes as a just judge for the final judgment, He would come as the King of mercy. He told her that before He comes as a just Judge for the final judgment, all the light in heaven will go out, and darkness would envelop the world. Then we would see a crucifix in the sky and see light beaming from the wounds of Christ which would illuminate the world for a short time. One of Jesus’ message to Sister Faustina about His divine mercy is:

***“I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day all the divine floodgates through which grace flow are opened. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet.” —St. Faustina’s Diary 699 (Note: confession does not have to be done on the Sunday itself. Beforehand is fine.)***

The Divine Mercy was suppressed by the Church from 1959 to 1978 because of bad translations from the original Polish. The faulty translation was regarded as not conforming to the doctrine of the Church. Once the translations were corrected, the ban was lifted. The reversal of the suppression was worked on tirelessly by a Cardinal and Archbishop of Krakow (Poland). In the same year that the suppression was lifted (1978), that cardinal was elected pope and took the name John Paul II.

The chaplet of divine mercy which is said at 3:00 P.M. daily in remembrance of Jesus’ death on the cross on EWTN (Eternal World Television Network) and on Mater Dei Radio is a great prayer of devotion to the Divine Mercy of God. The image of the divine mercy has been used in exorcism. By touching the image with humility, those who had been in bondage to the devil are freed by trusting in the power of Jesus.

All our readings today point us to the Mercy of God towards His children. God in His mercy by creating the world first showed His mercy. Then, He made a promise in His mercy to our first fallen parents that we would be rescued by the Son of a woman who would crush the head of the old enemy the serpent to redeem humanity from her fallen state. Then in His mercy, He sent His only begotten Son to redeem us from the jaws of sin and death. His Son in His mercy suffered for, and died a pitiable death for us on the cross. It is the effect of that promise that we heard about in our first reading.

The Apostles chosen by Jesus after Pentecost as promised by Jesus started to build on the Church Jesus said He would build upon Peter. They were living peacefully in a community following the teachings of the apostles, daily breaking bread or receiving the Eucharist, and they dedicated their lives to prayer, with no one lacking in their needs. God who wants everyone to be saved, in His mercy, added new members to the community and the Church continues to grow to the amazement of the Jews. They were first called the “Way” and then in Antioch, they were called Christians. Around the year 109 AD, they were called Catholics as documented in a letter by St. Ignatius of Antioch a student under Apostle St. John who wrote the Gospel of John.

In our second reading, from the letter of St. Peter, again, we have the theme of Divine Mercy proclaimed. We heard that God in His great Divine Mercy gave us the gift of Baptism so we can be born again by water and Holy Spirit. It is the living hope that our Lord Jesus Christ gave us through His passion, death, and resurrection. In His mercy, He suffered for us so we can live eternally with Him in heaven. According to St. Peter, through Divine Mercy, we will inherit imperishable, undefiled, and unfading grace in heaven, though we might have to suffer through trials and tribulations so our faith could be refined which will lead us to praise, glory, and honor when Christ comes again.

In our Gospel reading, we heard about how Jesus showered His Divine Mercy on His disciples who except for one member, John, abandoned Him, another denied Him at the time of His trial and greatest need of their undying love. Jesus entered their hiding room with the doors locked because they were afraid of being persecuted by the authorities. His first words to them was, **“Peace be with you.”** To let them know who He is, He showed them His hands and side. The disciples rejoiced. Then for the second time, He repeated His greeting of Peace and then gave them a commission by sending them out just as His Father had sent Him out into the world.

In sending them out, He also gave them power of the Holy Spirit by breathing on them just as God breath on Adam and Eve at creation. By giving them the Holy Spirit, He gave them the power to forgive or retain sins of others and of each other. This is an act of Divine Mercy for the whole of humanity. Because sin separates us from God, Jesus wanted to show us mercy that would renew our baptismal gift of being born again. So, every time we receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we become fully reconciled to God, and God sees us as sinless in the same way He sees His only begotten Son. Even though we sin again, God continues to forgive us each time we are reconciled with Him.

The story continues with Thomas who was not with other disciples. When told, Thomas refused to believe. Then for the second time, Jesus appeared to them when Thomas was with the others. So that Thomas might believe, Jesus asked him to touch His wounds since Thomas had said that is the only way he would believe that Jesus had been resurrected. However, through Thomas’ doubt, all of humanity who could not be present, received a blessing from Jesus in His Divine Mercy. John the apostle then told us that Jesus did many more signs in the presence of His disciples that were not written down. But what has been written was written so that we who come after, would not doubt that our Lord Jesus Christ is risen as He promised.

As we come with reverence to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, let us thank Him for His gift of Divine Mercy.