

Divine Mercy Sunday
April 28, 2019
“God’s Gracious Mercy”

Acts 5:12-16

Rev 1:9...19

Jn 20:19-31

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

Sad to say, we are not a very forgiving country. Many states still have the death penalty. Most people want some kind of payback when they have been injured or offended. And even the best of us takes comfort knowing that “What goes around, comes around” regarding people getting their just desserts for what they have done.

Nevertheless, how do we feel when we are the ones guilty of the wrong-doing? How do we feel when we have harmed another by our words, by our action or non-action? I dare say, that at some point, we realize what we have done – and want to make amends. If we have any decency at all, we want to apologize and make things right!

However, this is possible only if the person injured will receive our apology – and our attempt to make up in some way for what we have done. Unfortunately, sometimes this is not possible. They are gone; they are unreachable; they are so far in our past that there is no way to re-connect.

Nevertheless, if, somehow, we are able to make things right in some small way – If we can, somehow, be forgiven – Then, there is a wonderful experience of relief and gratitude for their graciousness and magnanimity in our regard.

All this being said, we can well-imagine the reaction of the disciples when Jesus appeared to them on that first Easter evening. As a group, they had all failed. Judas had betrayed Jesus; Peter had denied him; while all the rest had run away! How could they ever undo what they had done or had failed to prevent? And the answer was: “Nothing!” They could not bring Jesus back!

And yet, this is exactly what Jesus did! He came back. He returned and brought them an unimaginable forgiveness! There was no reprimand – no condemnation – no terrible reprisal! There was only mercy and love! “Peace be with you,” is what Jesus said. He even said it a second time: “Peace be with you!”

And then came the commission. As the Father had sent him, Jesus was now sending them. They were to bring the mercy, the forgiveness, the unbelievable love of God – to others throughout the world. They were given the Holy Spirit of Jesus and told to forgive others, just as they had been forgiven. They were to bring the mercy of God to all those repentant souls who thought they were beyond mercy or salvation.

Brothers and Sisters, sometimes it's difficult for people to believe in the forgiveness of God, especially when they cannot experience human forgiveness. This can actually become a barrier to believe in God or to accept formal religious practice. This is especially so when they feel so broken and unforgiven. This is why it's so important for us to take on the role of a minister of forgiveness – Because in a real way, we are a stumbling block to others' faith when we fail or refuse to forgive.

Furthermore, forgiveness means much more than mere words. It is demonstrated by our attitude and our behavior. We must at least make some attempt to bring true peace to those who have offended or harmed us – just as Jesus did to his disciples on that first Easter evening.

When someone forgives us, we are not only changed – we are empowered. We become different. We can do things we could not do before. Perhaps we even see or understand things we could not before. Most importantly, we understand that as God has treated us, so, likewise, are we to treat others. Thus, we can unlock the potential in others to **be** all and to **do** all that the power of God's grace can work in them and in their hearts!

So, let us pray, on this Sunday of Divine Mercy, to be able to show forth that mercy just as God has been merciful to us. And may we be forever grateful for God's graciousness in our own regard!

Amen.

April 28, 2019

Msgr. Russell G. Terra