

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY (C) GOD IS MERCIFUL AND KIND

Today, the second Sunday of Easter, was declared Divine Mercy Sunday by St. Pope John Paul II. He was inspired by the encounter Sr. Faustina Kowalsky had with Jesus during which it was revealed to her the tremendous mercy of God to all creation.

The scriptures tell us of the love and mercy of God, but very often we have a different opinion about who God is - a stern and no-nonsense God; a God who is angry at every least mistake we make. In the DIARY of Sr. Faustina, she wrote how God revealed to her and told her: "My heart overflows with great mercy for souls....If only they could understand that I am the best of Fathers to them and that it is for them that the Blood and Water flowed from my Heart as from a fountain overflowing with mercy. I desire to bestow my graces upon souls, but they do not want to accept them....Oh how indifferent are souls to so much goodness, so many proofs of love....They have time for everything, but they have no time to come to Me for graces," (Diary 367).

It is not out of place that this Sunday is declared Divine Mercy Sunday, because the gospel gives us the example of how God has shown us His mercy through Christ, and He continues to do so through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The first reading also tells us how God through his apostles healed the people and delivered them from the unclean spirits, to show His love and concern for His children.

We heard from the gospel that Jesus said to the apostles, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you", and when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained". St. Peter, in his first letter, told the believers: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy we

have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,” (1Pet.1:3).

God is so merciful and loving that He has shared His power to forgive sin and to heal with human beings. He has made it easily accessible to those who are willing to obtain mercy and healing from Him.

Jesus is telling us that we are not to be afraid, because He is alive, and He holds the keys of death and the netherworld. He is the first and the last, which means every other thing comes in between Him. This is another assurance that through Jesus, there is hope for us to have our sins forgiven and our needs met. We are not to run away from His merciful love shown to us through Jesus.

The prophets tell us how God is ever ready to forgive us our sins. Isaiah tells us how God is ready to sit down with us to talk over our evil deeds, (Isa.1:18-20); He is not interested in the death of the sinner, (Ez.18:32). He is always calling His children to come back to Him, (Hos.11:1-2).

Jesus is the ‘mercy and love’ of God. He shed His blood for the sinner, and gave the power to forgive sin. He forgave those who crucified Him, and promised everlasting life to the repentant thief. He also told Sr. Faustina: “Tell sinners that I am always waiting for them, that I listen intently to the beating of their heart....When will it beat for me?” (Diary 1728). We are to respond to God’s mercy and love with faith and repentance.

As God has forgiven our sins in Christ and wants us to experience His love and mercy always, He wants us also to forgive one another. The early believers lived in peace and shared things in common; can we describe our parish as a community of believers? What do we have in common with the early believers?