

Divine Mercy Sunday
April 19, 2020
“Ministers of God’s Mercy”

Acts 2:42-47

1 Pet 1:3-9

Jn 20:19-31

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

Sooner or later in our life, every one of us will do something that causes great harm and pain to someone we love. It might be that we were unaware of the hurt we perpetrated – It might be that it was done deliberately, to retaliate for something that was done to us – It might have been an accident or something that was the result of carelessness.

In any case, the damage was done physically, emotionally, or spiritually to another – And it was beyond our power to change, to heal, or to rectify the harm we did and the pain we caused.

Sometimes, it is only years later that we understand what we once did. However, whenever we do realize the seriousness of our action – or inaction – we begin to be haunted with the memory of it – and by the truth of just how terrible a person we can be!

Most of us will apologize as soon as we realize what we have done to hurt another. Yet, even if the apology is received, it doesn’t take away the fact and the history of what we did or failed to do. For just as the one we love carries the scar of our injury – so do we carry the darkness of the evil we did, in our soul!

So how do we make things right? How do we remove the scar of the wound from the pain we have caused to another? How do we live with our inherent unworthiness? Fortunately, the answers are in the Gospel selection for today!

The disciples of Jesus all failed in the worse way imaginable. They did nothing to help Jesus – or to prevent his suffering and death. Judas betrayed him – Peter denied him – and everyone else ran away! At the cross were only Mary his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary Magdalene, and the beloved disciple, John!

The disciples of Jesus must have been miserable after all that had happened. Perhaps the only consolation they experienced was that they were all guilty. They had all failed Jesus – and had failed miserably! They probably stayed together in their mutual remorse, sadness, and pain. Moreover, they still feared for their own lives.

It was at that lowest moment that Jesus appeared to them. Suddenly, Jesus was in their midst. He wished them well! “Shalom!” he said. “Peace be with you!”

The disciples were so overwhelmed that they failed even to apologize for their failure! Jesus didn’t have to tell them that they were forgiven – because they felt it in their deepest selves – in their heart of hearts – in their very souls!

Then Jesus did an extraordinary thing. He imparted the Holy Spirit to them and commissioned them to carry on his mission. As he forgave them, so now, must they become ministers and bearers of forgiveness to others throughout the world!

Brothers and Sisters, as we have been forgiven, so must we each become ministers and bearers of forgiveness ourselves. Only God can take away the darkness we experience because of the pain, the harm, and the suffering we have caused others to experience. Yet, even so, only we can help others through their own darkness to look to God who, alone, can dispel it!

The paradox of the mystery of forgiveness is that it is only if we forgive others for all they have done to us, can we be absolved for all the sins and crimes that we have committed. All that God asks of us is to be sorry, to be repentant, to make amends. Then He will embrace us with that divine forgiveness that eliminates our personal darkness with the flood of His light, love, and peace!

Sometimes, we hear people say that they will forgive but not forget. This might be because the memory of the hurt continues to plague them. But they are wrong! For if we truly forgive, then the peace of God can overwhelm us – and we will forget! This is the peace which surpasses understanding, that comes through Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit!

So, let us pray, on this Sunday of Divine Mercy, that we face the truth of all the harm and pain we have caused others – May we repent, apologize, make amends – and be healed by God – And as God has healed and forgiven us with His mercy, so may we become ministers of His mercy, forgiveness, and healing to all others!

Amen.

April 19, 2020

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