

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER
(DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY)
FAITH IN THE MERCY OF GOD`

April 15/16, 2023

God is always addressed as a merciful God, full of love and compassion. This is found in the scriptures, but many a time we see God or think about Him as a stern and no-nonsense God. Our opinion about Him sometimes is that He is always looking out to see the wrong side of us and punish us. But He revealed to Sr. Faustina that He is merciful and gracious.

The passion and resurrection of Christ from the dead is a clear manifestation of the love and mercy of God towards His children. There is the temptation to think that the resurrection was not real, and Thomas was the first to fall into that temptation. He could not believe that his Master had risen from the dead until he saw Him. He then proclaimed Jesus as his Lord and God.

There are so many mysteries surrounding us which we need faith in order to accept them. The virginal birth of Jesus; the Eucharist as Jesus' Real Presence, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which we heard Jesus giving the power to His disciples to administer to His people, among others. All these are to help us know more about the power of God and His mercy.

St. Peter told the believers that God has shown us His mercy through the resurrection of Jesus, and we have received new birth. What we are to inherit is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven. Guarded through faith, our salvation would be revealed to us at the last time. It is through this faith in the resurrection of Jesus that God's mercy towards us can be understood. Thomas's faith was tested and was purified. In the same way, our faith will be tested through trials, but we are not to give up.

The mercy of God is there for those who are ready to repent. Jesus told the disciples: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." It is when I am ready to repent and confess that my sins will be forgiven. Here too, I need faith that through the priest, God forgives sin, no matter how big and serious it may be. God is so kind that He decided to share His power to forgive sin to His priests. He has made it easily accessible to all who are ready to obtain mercy

from Him. Unfortunately, as He told Sr. Faustina, many are running away from His merciful love.

The prophets repeatedly, expressed God's desire to forgive and forget. Isaiah tells us how God is ready to sit down with us and talk about our sinful situation; (Isa.1:18-20). He is not interested in the death of the sinner, (Ez.18:32). Jesus demonstrated in many ways how His Father is ready to forgive sins, and most especially when He forgave those who tortured and crucified Him and admitted the repentant thief into His kingdom.

I am to respond to the mercy of God with faith and repentance. The need to confess sins was expressed to Moses by God to convey it to the Israelites: "Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, 'Speak to the Israelites: If a man or woman commits any of the sins by which people break faith with Yahweh, that person incurs guilt. The person must confess the sin committed and restore in full the amount owed'" (Nm.5:5-6/Lev.5:1-6). So, confession of sins has been a divine obligation since the time of the Exodus. How do I cherish this sacrament? Do I want to reconcile with God? How can I confess if I consider everything I do as good and see nothing wrong with my actions? The problem is that society tells me that everything is right and good so I should not worry about my thoughts, words and actions.

As God wants us to experience His mercy, He also wants us to show mercy and love to one another. The early believers lived in peace and harmony and shared everything in common. There was no fear or suspicion of one another. Can we describe our parish as a community of believers? The early Christians prayed together, ate together, and shared their properties together, why can't we do the same? We need love and mercy.