

## **DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY – SECOND SUNDAY of EASTER April 19, 2020**

Happy Feast of Divine Mercy! Today on 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter, we celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday.

### **Brief historical background and the significance of the feast day.**

On April 30, 2000, during the Great Jubilee Year 2000, Pope John Paul II at the canonization of Sr. Maria Faustina Kowalska in Rome, declared the Second Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday.

On February 22, 1931, Sr. Faustina sees a vision of radiant Lord Jesus, who told her to paint an image of him according to the pattern she sees. It is the image of Risen Jesus bringing mercy to the world. Jesus' right hand is raised in blessing while his left hand points to his heart. From the open heart of Jesus two rays of light shine forth, pale and red, illuminating the whole world. The two rays, Jesus Himself told her, represents blood and water. (Diary 299).

Blood and water, we immediately think of the testimony given by St. John, who, when a soldier on Calvary pierced Christ's side with his spear, blood and water gushed from it. (John 19:34). Moreover, if the blood recalls the sacrifices of the cross and the gift of the Eucharist, the water, in St. John's symbolism, represent not only Baptism but also the gift of the Holy Spirit. (John 3:5; 4:14; 7:37-39).

Jesus stated the following amazing statement to Sr. Faustina: "My daughter tell the whole world about My inconceivable mercy. I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and a 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 grace 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 are opened all the divine floodgate through which graces flow. Let no souls fear to draw near to Me, even though, its sins be as scarlet. My mercy is so great that no man or angel, will be able to fathom it throughout all eternity. Everything that exists has come from the very depth of My tender mercy. Every soul in its relation to Me will contemplate My love and mercy throughout eternity.

The Feast of Mercy emerged from My very depths of tenderness. It is My desire that it be solemnly celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter. Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the Fount of My mercy." (Diary 699).

The image of Jesus, the Divine Mercy, is to have a visual reminder of all that Jesus did for us through His Passion, Death, and Resurrection...and a reminder, too, of what He asks of us in return – to trust Him and be merciful to others:

"I want the Image to be solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter, and I want it to be venerated publicly so that every soul may know about it." (Diary 341).

On this Divine Mercy Sunday, though you could not be present in person, the solemn Sunday Mass was offered at 7:00am this morning and all parishioners were remembered in its intentions. The Divine Mercy Chaplet & Prayer were also recited on behalf of you all.

### **Some Reflections on Covid – 19 Pandemic and Our Need to Recognize Repentance:**

A priest friend was sharing in phone conversation “how he felt that all that is happening around us today should not be dismissed simply as nature’s upheavals, but also should be reflected as part of God’s chastisements”.

The sacred Scriptures are filled with God who chastises for the sake of His children. (Psalm 94: 12, Psalm 118:18, Proverbs 3:11-12, Jeremiah 30: 11, Hebrews 12:7-8).

By chastisement, he stated “like a father who disciplines his beloved children when they refuse to heed his words and warnings from danger. Therefore, not so much the anger of God but sorrowful Father who seeks to bring His wayward children back to the path His Son Jesus Christ has revealed to us, the Way the Truth and the Life.” (John 14:6).

He shared by stating, “look what we have done...this year and in the recent past years... abortion legalized to the 9<sup>th</sup> month by rationalizing as woman’s health rights and celebrated, rampant sexual promiscuity and dissolution of gender identity, legalizing of euthanasia, approval of devil worship as freedom of religion, youth and children exploited and the idolization of celebrities of all sorts, from sports to movie actors. The world created heroes among them, while we as a church seemed to lack heroes we can look up to.”

“Most of all, the profound sadness in the Catholic Church with some infestations of homosexuals and child molestations in its ranks, priests, bishops and perhaps resting all the way up in failures or reluctance to honestly deal with it. The sacredness of the Sacraments of Marriage, Confessions & Holy Eucharist all seemed to be trampled.” (Pew Research, April 5, 2019; only 31% U.S. Catholics believe in the Real Presence in the Eucharist).

His words made me unsettled and perhaps they did so because I perceived truths in what he shared. Recently from the hierarchy we heard phrases like this pandemic, fires, flood are “one of nature’s responses...” Relating as though nature was a living person. We both perceived error in those pantheistic tone, personifying nature. (Christianity is a monotheistic belief - in one God, whereas a polytheistic religion such as Hinduism holds belief in many gods).

Therefore, nature is subservient to God who created it, nature is not a person nor god. Man & woman alone hold the dignity (CCC 357). Perhaps this Divine Mercy Sunday, we all need to take few moments and reflect on our need to repentance; to change our lives that is not of the Gospel truth. Perhaps the Covid – 19 pandemic, earthquakes, fires, locust swarms of biblical proportion, all happening around the world should awaken us all from our spiritual slumber!

Have a blessed week in the Lord! God bless you all! Fr. Paulo ofm cap.

