

April 16, 2023
Cycle A – Divine Mercy Sunday (2nd Sunday of Easter)

Acts 2:14, 22-33

Psalm: 16:1-2, 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11

1 Peter 1:17-21

Luke 24:13-35

Notes from Bishop Peter

On April 30, 2000, Pope Saint John Paul II designated today, the Second Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday. He had been influenced as a priest and bishop in Poland by the revelations made to the young nun, Faustina Kowalska. He canonized her that same day. As an aside, a nun is a religious woman who lives in a convent or cloister whereas a religious sister is active in the world.

The apparitions began in 1931 and she died six years later. She was simple and sincere, characteristics of those God chooses to make such messages known, such as Saint Margaret Mary to whom Jesus revealed his Sacred Heart.

Jesus gave a glimpse of his infinite mercy to Saint Faustina when religion had become an intellectual matter rather than including the heart and many tended to see God as one who punishes. This negative image of God began to change because of the life and writings of Thérèse of Lisieux who profoundly believed that God loved her and taught that people should believe and even feel that God loves them and wants them to be saved.

God's greatest attribute, according to Pope Francis, is the mercy he shows each and every one of us. Thus it is not surprising in that Luke says, "Be merciful as your Heavenly Father is merciful."

Adam and Eve thought that by eating the forbidden fruit, they would be like God. How ridiculous! Jesus, however, tells us how we can be like God, by believing in God's love and mercy and then manifesting that mercy to others.

Here are some thoughts from Saint Faustina herself as she prays to let the mercy of God shine through her own life.

"O Lord, I want to be completely transformed into your mercy and to be your living reflection. May the greatest of all divine attributes, your unfathomable mercy, pass through my heart and soul to my neighbor."
(This should be our prayer too.)

“Help me, O Lord, so that my eyes may be merciful, so that I may never suspect or judge from appearances but look for what is beautiful in my neighbors’ souls and come to their rescue.”

“Help me, Lord, so that my ears may be merciful, so that I may give heed to my neighbors’ needs and not be indifferent to their pain.”

“Help me, Lord, that my tongue may be merciful so I will never speak negatively of my neighbors while taking upon myself the most difficult and toilsome tasks.”

“Help me, Lord, that my heart may be merciful, so that I myself may feel all the sufferings of my neighbors...”

“God of unfathomable mercy, embrace the whole world and pour yourself out upon us through the merciful Heart of Jesus.” (Cited in the missalette, “Magnificat,” April, 2018, p.ps. 125-6) On reading these words I had to make an examination of conscience!

God manifests his mercy in many ways and in particular through the Sacraments such as Penance or Reconciliation. I have been the recipient of God’s mercy in this sacrament and have had the privilege of being God’s instrument many times. If you have been away from the church or have not confessed in a long time, please avail yourselves of the beautiful font of God’s mercy. You will be glad you did.

On this Divine Mercy Sunday, may the Lord Jesus help us to open our hearts to his mercy and forgiveness. Then we shall be able to express that mercy and forgiveness to others and really become like God.

Amen.