

Divine Mercy Sunday April 7, 2024

Today we are celebrating Divine Mercy Sunday. Saint Pope John Paul II canonized Blessed Sister Faustina on the 30th of April, 2000, by celebrating the Second Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday. The new Saint Faustina invites us by the witness of her life to keep our faith and hope fixed on God the Father, rich in mercy, who saved us by the precious blood of His Son.

During her short life, the Lord Jesus assigned to St. Faustina three basic tasks:

1. Pray for souls, entrusting them to God's incomprehensible Mercy.
2. Tell the world about God's Generous Mercy.
3. Start a new movement in the Church focusing on God's Mercy.

The vision given to St. Faustina, shows Jesus raising his right hand in a gesture of blessing, with his left hand on his heart from which gush forth two rays, one red and one white. The picture contains the message, "Jesus, I trust in You!" (*Jezu ufam Tobie*). The rays streaming out have symbolic meaning: red for the blood of Jesus, which is the life of souls and white for the water which justifies souls. The whole image is symbolic of the mercy, forgiveness and love of God.

The readings for this Sunday are about God's mercy, the necessity for trusting faith and the need for God's forgiveness of sins. God revealed His mercy by sending His only-begotten Son to become our Savior and Lord by his suffering, death and resurrection. Divine mercy is given to us also in each celebration of the sacraments.

In the gospel we see Jesus say "*Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained*" (Jn 20:23). It emphasizes the importance of faith in the all-pervading presence of the Risen Lord of mercy. Jesus showed of his mercy by strengthening the faith of Thomas.

When Jesus appeared to the apostles, St. Thomas was not there. Therefore, Thomas the apostle wanted to see Jesus and to believe in him. Jesus in his Mercy appeared to him. By seeing Jesus' risen body, Thomas answered

him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus responded, "*Blessed are those who have not seen but have believed.*" Thomas was able to overcome his doubts by seeing and touching the risen Jesus. Modern Christians, who are no longer able to "see" Jesus with their eyes or touch Him with their hands, must believe what they hear. That is why Paul reminds us that "faith comes from hearing" (Rom 10:17).

The profession of faith of Thomas is significant for two reasons.

1) It is the foundation of our Christian faith. Our faith is based on the divinity of Jesus as proved by his miracles, especially by the supreme miracle of his resurrection from the dead. Thomas' profession of faith is the strongest evidence we have of the resurrection of Jesus.

2) Thomas' faith culminated in his self-surrender to Jesus, expressed in his heroic missionary expedition to India in A.D. 52, his fearless preaching, and the powerful testimony given by his martyrdom in A.D. 72. "*Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever!*" (Ps 118).

We receive God's mercy throughout the year through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Finding time for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is another good way to receive Divine Mercy. The gospel command, "*Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful,*" demands that we show mercy to our fellow human beings always and everywhere. We radiate God's mercy to others by our actions, our words, and our prayers. It is mainly through the corporal and spiritual works of mercy that we practice mercy in our daily lives and become eligible for God's merciful judgment.

We remember the words of Pope John XXIII: "Every believer in this world must become a spark of Christ's light."

In the Mass when the priest rises the sacred host and people profess of their faith and recall the words of St. Thomas words by saying; my Lord and God.