

Today we celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday.

Why? “Divine Mercy In My Soul”. That’s why. “Divine Mercy in My Soul” is the title of the Diary of St Faustina—a Polish nun who died in 1938. It is the record of her life experience—the journey of her soul. She was graced by a special communion with God, and the Diary expresses her conviction that this communion ought to be the centre of our lives. But it is not simply a conviction of hers. Christ Jesus commanded it of her, *“I desire that there be a Feast of Mercy. I want this image (Divine Mercy Image), which you will paint with a brush, to be solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter; that Sunday is to be the Feast of Mercy.”* This is what Jesus commanded her to do. And now, in obedience to Jesus, the Church celebrates this year the 21st anniversary of Divine Mercy Sunday—the second Sunday of Easter.

What is Mercy?

The English word “mercy” goes back to the Latin word “misericordia” which is composed of two words. “Cordia” which means heart. The first part “miseri” refers to suffering. Mercy, then, means to have a heart willing to suffer for others. That is what Jesus does for us in His suffering and death on the cross. And now, today, He reminds us of it. In St Faustina’s Diary He tells of His urgency to bless us with this mercy: *“My Mercy is clamouring (shouting) to be poured out on the world.”*

Why did God choose this Second Sunday of Easter to be Divine Mercy Sunday?

Because—the opening prayer today addresses the Father as the “God of *Mercy*.” And in the Responsorial Psalm we hear several times, “His steadfast love endures forever;” what is His love? It is His *mercy*.

Besides mentioning “*mercy*”, today’s readings illustrate *mercy* in action:

“Peace be with you”, Jesus says to us today in the Gospel. This greeting means more than just “Hi”. He is telling us something important. He is saying the peace He won for us cost him blood, his life. And he tells us clearly what this peace involves: *“Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them...”* So, in today’s Gospel Jesus give the apostles the Holy Spirit with the power to free us from our sins. This freedom—or absolution—comes through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. THIS—is “*mercy*” in action.

From the Acts of the Apostles, in the first reading, we again glimpse *mercy* in action. It calls our attention to the *corporal works of mercy* with these words: “...They would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need”; “As any had need?” What this really means is to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless and so on.—The corporal works of *mercy*.

In the second reading, St Peter's letter says, “By his great *mercy* He has given us a new birth into a living hope...” and “...even if now for a little while you have had to suffer...”; in other words, St Peter is focusing on what are called the *spiritual works of mercy* such as: instruct the ignorant (passing on the faith), and comfort the afflicted.

On this Divine Mercy Sunday, and during this Easter season, we ask God to open our hearts so that we can receive into our souls his *Mercy*—His Holy Spirit.

Ultimately *mercy* results not so much from our effort as from God's free gift. As Shakespeare said,
“It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven.”

Or as the 2nd Eucharistic Prayer puts it,
“...Send down your Holy Spirit...like the dew fall.”



Prayer of the Faithful
MERCY SUNDAY—2nd Sunday of Easter
APRIL 19, 2020

Leader:

On this Feast of Your Mercy Lord,
let your people know Your love for them.

LECTOR: Risen Lord, Hear Our Prayer.

We bring to you Francis our Pope, the Bishops, all the clergy,
who are called to be ambassadors for Christ—messengers of His mercy:

We pray...

Look with Mercy on your world afflicted with the pandemic. Grant
grace and peace to all, especially to health workers and grocery cashiers:

We pray...

Give us the power to embrace the corporal and spiritual works
of mercy demanded by our Baptism:

We pray...

Let your grace free those enslaved by their past sins or decisions.
That the wounds of Christ may encourage them to seek his
surpassing love for them:

We pray...

Watch over all who are ill: may your Divine Mercy touch their hearts
with peace (especially) Candelabra Ferolino; Munchie Reyes;
Aisha Miranda; Samuel Jareno; Nestor and Josie; _____

We pray...

Give your life to the faithful departed (especially):
those who have died from the virus; and also for Fr Frederick Mazzarella;
& Fr. Alphonse de Valk; _____

We pray...

Leader:

Open wide our hearts
O Lord,
So that your grace and mercy
may descend into our hearts so that we
may know the joy of
your Resurrection.

Through Christ our Lord, who lives forever and ever. Amen.