

## Homily of Divine Mercy Sunday Second Sunday of Easter, Year B, 2024

**Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24; 1 John 5:1-6; John 20:19-31**

In the year 2000, Pope St. John Paul II canonized St. Faustina, and changed the second Sunday of Easter, which was celebrated as Low Sunday to be celebrated as Divine Mercy Sunday. Low Sunday means Easter celebrated in a lower degree.

St. Faustina was a Polish nun gifted with mystical visions, messages, and revelations from the Risen Jesus. This is a rare instance when a private revelation is recognized and raised to the level that it becomes a Sunday celebration by the Universal Church. The feast situates well following Easter Sunday to show that the events of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus for the redemption of humanity were out of God's gratuitous mercy. God's mercy is gratuitous because humanity did nothing to merit it.

St. Faustina wrote in her diary, "Proclaim that mercy is the greatest attribute of God. All God's works are crowned with mercy" (No. 301). God is so merciful and ever forgiving that he does not judge us according to our sins (Psalm 130:3). The Parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32 gives us a good idea of the depth of God's mercy and forgiveness. "God is love" (1 John 4:8); and his banner over us is love (Song of Solomon 2:4). Jesus is the highest expression of God's love for us. St. John writes, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life" (John 3:16).

We proclaim God's mercy, not only in words but also in deeds. God's mercy continues in our world through us if we become instruments of his mercy. In the first reading, the early Christian community sets a good example for us. "The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. ... There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need" (Acts 4:32-35). We are invited to imitate the early Christian community.

Jesus says, "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers [and sisters] of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40). Yes, when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit prisoners, bury the dead, and give alms to the poor, we do them for Jesus.

Jesus teaches us to be merciful even to enemies. He says, "Love your enemies and do good to them, ... [like] the Most-High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as also your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:35-36).

One of St. Faustina's visions is the image of the Divine Mercy of Jesus showing two rays, one reddish (symbolizing blood) and the other whitish (symbolizing water), with the words "***Jesus, I trust in you***" at the bottom. The image takes us back to the passion, crucifixion, and death of Jesus. When the soldier pierced the side of Jesus, "immediately blood and water flowed out" (John 19:34).

St. John says in the second reading, "This is the one who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ, not by water alone, but by water and blood" (1 John 5:6). Jesus says during the Last Supper, "This is my blood of the new covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28). St. Paul writes, "In him we have redemption through his blood" (Ephesians 1:7). About water, St. Paul writes, "Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word" (Ephesians 5:25-26).

Thomas was privileged to put his finger in the pierced side of Jesus and was healed of his doubt. We are more privileged than Thomas because we go beyond touching him to consuming him. May Jesus whom we consume bear lasting fruits in us, especially the fruit of mercy. St. Gregory of Nazianzen writes, “Not even night should interrupt you in your duty of mercy. Do not say: ‘*Come back and I will give you something tomorrow.*’ ... The Lord of all asks for mercy, not sacrifice, and mercy is greater than myriads of fattened lambs.” St. James writes, “Mercy triumphs over judgment” (James 2:13). In the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant, the master asked the servant, “Should you not have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?” (Matthew 18:33).

“For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world. Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.”

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