

Divine Mercy Sunday 2022

“The Gift of God’s Mercy”

1. **The ultimate source of God’s mercy** or His all-encompassing love for the human race and the desire for every person’s ultimate salvation – if we are willing to cooperate with our free will - **is the salvific Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God made man.** Hence the Divine Mercy Novena each year begins on Good Friday and concludes on Divine Mercy Sunday. Hopefully we participated in this Novena and we can do it throughout the year too. But to benefit from God’s mercy two things need to happen: **one** we need to acknowledge our sinfulness hence the Sacrament of God’s Mercy, i.e. Confession, is established today in the Gospel reading. And **secondly** we have to Trust in Jesus’s power to forgive, heal and transform us in holiness over time.
2. **No soul is beyond God’s power to forgive and heal.** Many true stories of souls appearing to the saints and other holy people down through the ages show this. In that very insightful book on the reality of Purgatory: *Hungry Souls*, it is striking how a number of the souls who appeared were people who were seemingly lost forever, e.g., people who have committed **suicide** – which is a horrible thing. Many of you were taught growing up that if a person committed suicide they basically automatically went to Hell. And on the surface that makes sense as taking one’s own life is an objectively a grave sin because one is rejecting the first great gift God gave us which is our life here on earth. But as the Church has realized in recent decades there are a number of complicated subjective factors that go into such a misguided decision to take one’s own life. As the Catechism puts it, *Grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide. We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives* (pars, 2282-83). Offering Masses for such souls, as well as praying the Rosary (esp. the Sorrowful mysteries and the 7 Sorrows Rosary) and Divine Mercy chaplet for the grace of final repentance for souls who are in the process of dying from suicide each day as well as for those souls

who are in Purgatory, often at the lower levels, is a supreme act of spiritual charity on our part. And remember because God is outside of time our prayers now can help a person who even committed suicide years ago hopefully come to repentance before they take their last breathe here on earth. See the example of St. Padre Pio and praying for his great-grandfather who had died years ago to have a holy death.

3. **Never give up on souls as you live your Faith with love and focus.** One of the beautiful signs that we are having a 2nd conversion, of which I recommend a book in my bulletin column this weekend called *Conversion* by Fr. Donald Haggerty, is that we have a greater concern for the salvation not only of our own soul but for the souls of the people in our family and social and work circle as well as people we don't even know. **If we don't have any real concern for the spiritual well-being and salvation of others, it's a sign our own Faith is weak at best and God is not real to us in a personal way.** Jesus through the gift of His Divine Mercy wants to change that – all we have to do is ask Him and He will act upon us over time through the power of the Holy Spirit. You see this reality in the lives of all the saints: *they were willing to pray more, to suffer more, to expend more of their time and energy and resources to offer their life for God and for the salvation of souls as God sees fit based on the saints own life circumstances.* As Jesus said to St. Faustina, so He says to us in similar ways if we are willing to be generous with Him, *“My daughter, know that if I allow you to feel and have a more profound knowledge of My sufferings, that is a grace from Me. But when your mind is dimmed and your sufferings are great, it is then that you take an active part in My Passion, and I am conforming you more fully to Myself. It is your task to submit yourself to My will at such times, more than at others.”* (Diary 1697). And then **Jesus said to St. Faustina** at another time, *“I desire that you know more profoundly the love that burns in My Heart for souls, and you will understand this when you meditate upon My Passion. Call upon My mercy on behalf of sinners; I desire their salvation. When you say this prayer, with a contrite heart and with faith on behalf of some sinner, I will give him or her the grace of conversion. This is the prayer: “O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of Mercy for us, I trust in You.”* (Divine Mercy Diary 186/187). May we live Jesus's message of Divine Mercy more profoundly each day. God bless you.