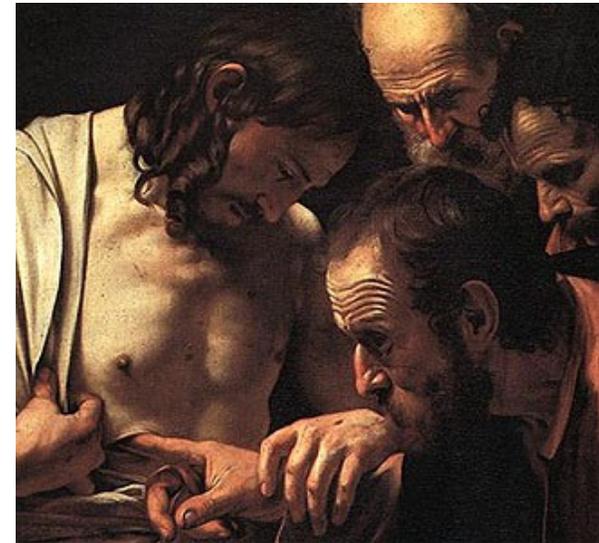


# Link to Liturgy



## Divine Mercy Sunday

### Lessons and Discussions

#### **Page 5 – Divine Mercy Sunday**

*“Jesus I trust in you”*

#### **Page 8 – For the sake of... (Old Testament)**

*“that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God”*

#### **Page 11 – For the sake of... (New Testament)**

*“you may have life in his name”*

#### **Page 15 – Reconciliation**

*“whoever sins you forgive are forgiven”*

#### **Page 23 – Doubting Thomas**

*“Unless I see the mark of the nails...I will not believe”*

#### **Page 25 – Saint Pope John Paul II**

#### **Page 31 – Peace**

*“Peace be with you”*

#### **Page 35 – War and Peace**

*Link to Liturgy provides faithful resources which use the latest audiovisual means alongside traditional means to evangelize & catechize thus linking life to the Gospel & the Gospel to life. Sign up Free to Link to Liturgy.*



**Communion Antiphon (Jn. 20:27) – Daily Roman Missal**

*Should be chanted three times so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred. Another song can be substituted, but should have the same theme; this should not be the norm.*

*Mitte manum tuam, et cognosce* *Jn 20: 27*

VI

**S** Tretch forth your hand, \* and feel the place where

the nails were, al-le-lu-ia; and be not doubtful but be-

lieving, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia.

**Source:** ccwatershed.org

**Alternate options:**Hymns

All Glory Be to God on High  
 O (Ye) Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing  
 Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven  
 Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above  
 There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

Praise

Amazing Love (Billy James Foote)  
 Mercy is Falling (David Ruis)  
 O Bread of Life (Maronite Hymn)

Remnant

Alive in You (Remnant)  
 Big Gulp (Remnant)  
 Chaplet of Divine Mercy (Remnant)

**Collect –Roman Missal**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
 Amen

God of everlasting mercy,  
 who in the very recurrence of the paschal feast  
 kindle the faith of the people you have made your own,  
 increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed,  
 that all may grasp and rightly understand  
 in what font they have been washed,  
 by whose Spirit they have been reborn,  
 by whose Blood they have been redeemed.  
 Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
 who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
 one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
 Amen

**Gospel Reading – John 20:19-31 –Roman Missal**

**Note:** *In the Tridentine Lectionary this reading is found on Low Sunday or White Sunday (Octave of Easter)*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John  
 - Glory to you O Lord

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and

have believed.” Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

The Gospel of the Lord.

- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

**Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings (Sunday within the Octave)**

From a sermon by Saint Augustine, bishop

I speak to you who have just been reborn in baptism, my little children in Christ, you who are the new offspring of the Church, gift of the Father, proof of Mother Church’s fruitfulness. All of you who stand fast in the Lord are a holy seed, a new colony of bees, the very flower of our ministry and fruit of our toil, my joy and my crown. It is the words of the Apostle that I address to you: Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh and its desires, so that you may be clothed with the life of him whom you have put on in this sacrament. You have all been clothed with Christ by your baptism in him. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor freeman; there is neither male nor female; you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Such is the power of this sacrament: it is a sacrament of new life which begins here and now with the forgiveness of all past sins, and will be brought to completion in the resurrection of the dead. You have been buried with Christ by baptism into death in order that, as Christ has risen from the dead, you also may walk in newness of life...This is the octave day of your new birth. Today is fulfilled in you the sign of faith that was prefigured in the Old Testament by the circumcision of the flesh on the eighth day after birth. When the Lord rose from the dead, he put off the mortality of the flesh; his risen body was still the same body, but it was no longer subject to death. By his resurrection he consecrated Sunday, or the Lord’s day. Through the third after his passion, this day is the eighth after the Sabbath, and thus also the first day of the week.

**Responsory – Office of Readings (Sunday within the Octave)**

- [56] T.J. Con, 3
- [57] Divine Intimacy pg. 941
- [58] Jn. 14:27
- [59] Council of Trent (1551): DS 1674
- [60] 1 Cor. 14,17-18
- [61] Father Emmerich Vogt, O.P. "The Eucharist and Peace." *The Twelve Step Review* (Spring 2007).
- [62] The Catholic Catechism pg. 429
- [63] Pope Benedict XVI, God is Near Us pg. 117
- [64] Mt. 5:3-12
- [65] Cf. CCC 2442
- [66] SRS 47 & 6; cf. 42
- [67] CCC 2442
- [68] The Catholic Catechism pg. 350
- [69] The Catholic Catechism pg. 350
- [70] The Catholic Catechism pg. 350
- [71] CCC 2304
- [72] The Catholic Catechism pg. 530
- [73] The Catholic Catechism pg. 531
- [74] John XXIII, Pacem in Terris, V, 167
- [75] The Catholic Catechism pg. 107
- [76] CCC 2304
- [77] Divine Intimacy pg. 941

- [2] homily on Mercy Sunday, 2001
- [3] Spiritual Reading from this Link to Liturgy packet
- [4] Diary 88
- [5] Diary 47
- [6] Diary 313
- [7] <http://www.divinemercysunday.com/pdf/UnderstandDM.pdf>
- [8] Diary 699
- [9] <http://www.divinemercysunday.com/how-to-celebrate.htm>
- [10] Diary 742
- [11] Isaiah 53:3
- [12] 1 Timothy 3:15
- [13] John 16:13
- [14] John 14:26
- [15] Fr. William G. Most – Source: <http://www.ewtn.com/faith/teachings/chura5.htm>
- [16] Matthew 5:7
- [17] John 14:12-14
- [18] John 10:10
- [19] CCC 1421
- [20] Pope John Paul II, Vatican City, March 27, 2004
- [21] CCC 1423
- [22] CCC 1424
- [23] OP 46: formula of absolution.
- [24] CCC 1424
- [25] CCC 1446
- [26] Fourth Council of Lateran (1215)
- [27] Basic Catholic Catechism Course pg. 104
- [28] Archbishop Jose Gomez, *The Tender Mercy of God*
- [29] John 20:20-23
- [30] Acts 8:17
- [31] Matthew 9:3
- [32] Roman Catechism, II, V, 18
- [33] CCC 1468
- [34] Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, II
- [35] CIC 916
- [36] CCC 1469
- [37] Jn 5:24
- [38] CCC 1470
- [39] Basic Catholic Catechism Course pg. 105
- [40] John 11:16
- [41] St. Gregory the Great, *Homilies on the Gospels*, 26, 7
- [42] *The Church's Year* pg. 270
- [43] John 20:29
- [44] *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* pg. 464
- [45] *In Conversation with God* 2.54.2
- [46] Mark 9:24
- [47] [http://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/press/documentazione/documents/santopadre\\_biografie/giovanni\\_paolo\\_ii\\_biografia\\_breve\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/documentazione/documents/santopadre_biografie/giovanni_paolo_ii_biografia_breve_en.html)
- [48] [www.worldyouthday.com](http://www.worldyouthday.com)
- [49] [www.theologyofthebody.net](http://www.theologyofthebody.net)
- [50] Fr. John Hardon, *Modern Catholic Dictionary*
- [51] *Modern Catholic Dictionary* pg. 411
- [52] St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, 19,13, 1:PL 41, 640
- [53] *Divine Intimacy* pg. 97
- [54] *The Catholic Catechism* pg. 429
- [55] CCC 1822

You have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.  
- When Christ who is your life appears, you will appear with him in glory, alleluia.

You must consider yourself dead to sin, but alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
- When Christ who is your life appears, you will appear with him in glory, alleluia.

### Divine Mercy Sunday – Lesson and Discussion

*“Jesus I trust in you”*

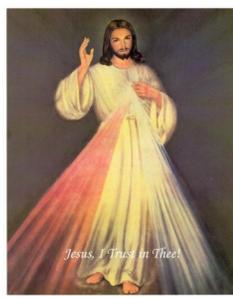
**What is Divine Mercy?** Divine Mercy is the term used that describes the love of God beyond anything that humankind deserves. Mercy is divine charity toward those who have sinned. Despite the fact that we are sinners, God continues to call us to be forgiven, gives us even more love, removes the punishment due to our sins, and blesses us beyond what we might have received from Him had we not sinned.[1] *“Divine Mercy! This is the Easter gift that the Church receives from the risen Christ and offers to humanity at the dawn of the third millennium....”*[2] This mercy of forgiveness is our beginning as Saint Augustine says, “a sacrament of new life which begins here and now with the forgiveness of all past sins.”[3] God wills to not only forgive our sins, but to give us a new life. What great love, that He not only removes the bad but fills us with good!

**What is Divine Mercy Sunday?** Divine Mercy was first revealed to a Polish sister who is now a saint named Saint Faustina. When she was 18, Saint Faustina began receiving visions of Jesus appearing to her. He directed her to enter a convent where he continued to appear to her and speak to her. She was asked by Jesus to promote His Divine Mercy, and establish the Sunday after Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday. He spoke these words to Saint Faustina, “I am King of Mercy. I desire that this image (the Divine Mercy image) be displayed in public on the first Sunday after Easter. That Sunday is the Feast of Mercy. Through the Word Incarnate, I make known the bottomless depth of My mercy.”[4]

In 2000, Saint John Paul II celebrated her canonization on May 1st, the Sunday after Easter Sunday. There he proclaimed that, “from now on throughout the Church this Sunday will be called “Divine Mercy Sunday.”

**Who is Saint Faustina?** St. Faustina was a Polish woman who became a nun at the age of twenty. She joined the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. Their mission was to care for and educate troubled young women. In the 1930's, she began receiving our Lord's message of mercy and was asked by Jesus to spread this message to the whole world. She died in 1938 of tuberculosis. Soon after her death, her sisters discovered that Saint Faustina had kept a diary while in the convent. This book, now an international bestseller, can be found in any Catholic Bookstore. During her visions, Jesus ordered her to have an image painted of him with the words "Jesus I trust in you." at the bottom.[5] She did as Jesus commanded and the Image is now an intimate part of Divine Mercy Sunday.

**What is the Divine Mercy Image?** The image of Divine Mercy that was revealed to St. Faustina by Jesus shows the resurrected Jesus in a white garment with two rays coming from his heart; one is red and the other white. The red and white represent his blood and water that poured out when the soldier pierced His side. The blood recalls the sacrifice of Golgotha and the mystery of the Eucharist while the white represents the water of our Baptism and the wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit. Despite the work of the artist, Saint Faustina was very sad about the way the painting had turned out. She wept to the Lord and cried, "Who will paint You as beautiful as You are?" Jesus responded, "Not in the beauty of the color, nor of the brush lies the greatness of this image, but in My grace." [6]



**Why does the Church celebrate this feast?** The Church celebrates this feast because of the authenticity of Saint Faustina and the mercy Christ shows us. It is good to note here that Divine Mercy Sunday is a relatively new feast that was established because of Saint Faustina's revelations, however, its primary focus has nothing to do with Saint Faustina. Her feast

### Marian Antiphon – Regina Caeli – Simple Tone

6.

**R** Egína caéli \* laetáre, alle-lú-ia : Qui-  
ru- ísti portáre, alle-lú-ia : Resurréxit, sic-u  
lú-ia : Ora pro nó-bis Dé-um, alle-lú- ia.

V. Guade et laetare, Virgo Maria, alleluia.

R. Quia surrexit Dominus vere, alleluia

Let us pray. O God, who by the Resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, didst vouchsafe to make glad the whole world; grant, we beseech Thee, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may lay hold of the joys of eternal life. AMEN

### English Translation

Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia; For He whom thou didst merit to bear, alleluia, has risen as He said, alleluia: Pray for us to God, alleluia.

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia!

R. Because the Lord is truly risen, alleluia!

### “The End” Notes

[1] Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 165

*example, we might ask a teacher to give us one more day to write a paper because we have had perfect attendance. We might ask out parents to not ground us because we have not broken our curfew all year. We sake for the sake of that one time, have mercy on me now. How great is the Passion of Our Lord? How much mercy with Our Father grants us for the sake of that Passion? The amount is endless. God's mercy is like an endless fountain, Saint Faustina says that the vessel in which we take to the fountain to receive the Mercy is as big as our trust. Jesus I trust in You!*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Begin with the Sign of the Cross, 1 Our Father, 1 Hail Mary and The Apostles Creed.

Then on the Our Father Beads say the following:

**Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.**

On the 10 Hail Mary Beads say the following:

**For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.**

*(Repeat step 2 and 3 for all five decades).*

Conclude with *(three times)*:

**Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

### **Oratory: Place of Prayer – Chaplet of Divine Mercy**

*The Divine Mercy Chaplet may be found on page 23 of the*

*Oratory: Place of Prayer Book*

*To purchase the Oratory: Place of Prayer Book - <http://remnantband.bandcamp.com/merc>*

day is celebrated on October 8th. The Second Sunday of Easter is, and has always been, celebrated as a solemnity because it is the Octave Day of Easter. The title “Divine Mercy Sunday” only amplifies the importance of the feast day. In making this “Divine Mercy Sunday,” Saint John Paul II harkens back to the early church father, St. Augustine, who called this particular Sunday, “the compendium of the days of mercy.”<sup>[7]</sup> The early church celebrated the Resurrection, the clearest manifestation of the Divinity of Jesus, with eight days of commemoration, which St. Augustine referred to as the “days of mercy and pardon.” The octave began with Easter Sunday and concluded with *Dominica in Albis*, or Sunday in White, which Augustine referred to as “the compendium of the days of mercy.”

Our Lord Jesus told St. Faustina, “The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day all the divine floodgates through which graces flow are opened. Let no soul fear to draw near to me, even though its sins be as scarlet.... Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the Fount of My Mercy.”<sup>[8]</sup> Jesus is plainly telling us, we not only should celebrate His resurrection on Easter, but also accept His invitation of Mercy and grace for the forgiveness of our sins. The Church has made praying the Divine Mercy Novena and doing these things that the Lord has asked a plenary indulgence. The plenary indulgence that was issued for Divine Mercy Sunday does not change the promises of Our Lord through St. Faustina. Rather, it provides the Church's highest mark of approval and endorsement and gives us more time to go to Confession.<sup>[9]</sup>

### **What should we do to celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday as**

**Jesus instructs us?** There are many things we can do. First, Christ told us that the first Sunday after Easter is the Feast of Mercy but there must also be acts of mercy. “I demand from you deeds of mercy, which are to arise out of love for me. You are to show mercy to your neighbors always and everywhere. You must not shrink from this or try to excuse or absolve yourself from it”.<sup>[10]</sup> Following the Second Vatican Council on the Sacred Liturgy, we are encouraged to do popular devotions in order to lead us in the liturgical season, and lead us in accordance with the sacred liturgy. (#13)

Thus, to fittingly observe the Feast of Mercy, we should:

1. On Good Friday, start the Divine Mercy Novena
2. Celebrate the Feast on the Sunday after Easter;

3. Sincerely repent of all our sins;
4. Place our complete trust in Jesus;
5. Go to Confession, preferably before Divine Mercy Sunday;
6. Receive Holy Communion on the day of the Feast;
7. Venerate the Image of The Divine Mercy;
8. Be merciful to others, through our actions, words, and prayers on their behalf.

### **For the sake of...(Old Testament) – Lesson and Discussion**

*“that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God”*

This lesson should be studied along with its sister lesson – *For the sake of... (New Testament)*

#### **ACTIVITY – For the Sake of...**

Option 1 - Assign individuals or groups one of the verse below. Make sure all verses are assigned. The individual or group should answer the following question. Is a promise or action made? Who makes the promise or action? Who is it made with or for? It is made for the sake of...?

**Option 2** – Use both the Old Testament and New Testament lesson. Give one group verses from the Old Testament and the other group verses from the New Testament. Have each group answer the questions above and then compare both lists.

**Genesis 18:23,24, 32** – “Then Abraham drew nearer to him and said, “Suppose there were fifty innocent people in the city; would you wipe out the place, rather than spare it for the sake of the fifty innocent people within it?”...But he still persisted, “Please, let not my Lord grow angry if I speak up this last time. What if there are at least ten there?” “For the sake of those ten,” he replied, “I will not destroy it.”

For the sake of ten – a whole city is spared. This promise was made to Abraham.

**Genesis 26:23-24** – From there Isaac went up to Beer-sheba. The same night the Lord appeared to him and said: “I am the God of your father Abraham. You have not need to fear, since I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham.”

For the sake of my servant Abraham - Isaac’s descendants are blessed and multiplied. This promise is made to Isaac.

be but an empty word unless it is founded on the order... founded on truth, built according to justice, animated and integrated by charity’ and, most importantly, ‘put into practice in freedom.’[74] Nothing can be coerced, not even world peace.”[75]

### **[See also the section covering war in the “other attacks against life” lesson]**

**How can there be true peace in the world?** As mentioned earlier, the fullness of peace will not reign until Jesus comes again. Also, “Peace is not merely the absence of war, and it is not limited to maintaining a balance of powers between adversaries. Peace cannot be attained on earth without safeguarding the goods of persons, free communication among men, respect for the dignity of persons and peoples, and the assiduous practice of fraternity.”[76]

“Our God is the God of peace...If men generally do not feel themselves to be children of God, it is because they are so little disposed to peace, so ready for disputes, quarrels, and war. They talk about peace but do not make peace, for they do not accept the guidance of the Spirit of wisdom.”[77] Let us create peace with our brothers and sisters and work to spread peace and equality to those who are less fortunate. We can do this by simply making sure that everyone we meet knows that God loves them and that we are all His children.

### **Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – Divine Mercy Chaplet**

*Please see the Divine Mercy lesson in the packet for history and information on the chaplet. When we say, chant or sing these words, the very words that come out of our mouth are the words that came out of Jesus’ mouth when He spoke them to Saint Faustina. Think of the many times that we quote movies and songs. Many times songs are continually in our head and out our mouth. These words are the words of an artist, songwriter, director and many times the words are not pleasing to God. Think how amazing it is to sing a song that was written by Jesus himself, the very words of God. In the chaplet we are connected spiritually to the Mass, whatever Mass is going on at the time that we pray “I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity”. We also are meditating on the Passion of Our Lord. Many times in our life we ask for pardon, for the sake of a past good deed. For*

society and as individuals when we let our pride, envy, and anger boil over until it leads to unspeakable atrocities.

**How can we stop war?** The danger of war among men hangs over us until Christ comes again. However, that does not mean that we should not strive for peace. “The Church has never been more insistent in pleading for peace and in offering nations the means for peace.”[68] There are four ways to achieve peace among our neighbors:

1. We must look “above all to ‘root out the causes of dissensions among men, on which war thrives and especially injustices.’”[69] Some injustices are excessive economic inequalities, cruel and abusive dictatorship, and some are at the root of all sin; envy, selfishness, and pride. Pope Clement I wrote to the Corinthians in the first century about pride swelling up inside. “Jealousy and envy, strife and sedition, persecution and anarchy, war and captivity. Then the dishonored rose up against the honored, the ignoble against the highly esteemed, the foolish against the wise, the young against the elders.”[70]

2. “Peace is the work of justice and the effects of charity.”[71] However, we must realize that perfect happiness and peace will only come when Jesus Christ comes again. Secular worldly powers like Communism try to devoid this last statement. They want people to think that absolute peace and paradise can be achieved in this world and that religion is only an “opiate” drug to trick us.

3. As we strive to give individuals more opportunities and equality, we must also look to help impoverished and developing countries. This is something that America has always excelled in. We are one of the most generous countries in the world. “While it is no guarantee of peace, nevertheless a sound economic base is an important condition for peaceful co-existence among nations, especially since in our days a serious gap has developed between prosperous and materially undeveloped nations.”[72]

4. It is not enough to give economic assistance; we should offer help at every level of a human person. This is where the Church can make great strides in helping communities foster a co-operation among nations. “The opportunity to practice the Beatitude of peacemakers on a cosmic scale has never been more open to the followers of Christ.”[73] “Peace,’ however, ‘will

**2 Samuel 5:12** – And David knew that the Lord had established him as king of Israel and had exalted his rule for the sake of his people.

For the sake of his people – David is established as king. This promise is made to David and the Israelites.

**1 Kings 11-13** – So the Lord said to Solomon: “Since this is what you want, and you have not kept my covenant and my statues which I enjoined on you, I will deprive you of the kingdom and give it to your servant. I will not do this during your lifetime, however, for the sake of your father David; it is your son whom I will deprive. Nor will I take away the whole kingdom. I will leave your son one tribe for the sake of my servant David and of Jerusalem, which I have chosen.”

For the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem – Solomon is spared the full punishment he was to be given. This promise was made to King Solomon.

**2 Kings 8:16-19** – In the fifth year of Joram, son of Ahab, king of Israel, Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, became king. He was thirty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. He conducted himself like the kings of Israel of the line of Ahab, since the sister of Ahab was his wife; and he did evil in the Lord’s sight. Even so, the Lord was unwilling to destroy Judah, because of [for the sake of] his servant David. For he had promised that he would leave him a lamp in the Lord’s presence for all time.

For the sake of his servant David – Judah is not destroyed.

**Psalms 23:3** – You restore my strength. You guide me along the right path for the sake of your name.

For the sake of your name – you lead me along the right path

**Psalms 79:9** – Help us, God our savior, for the glory of your name. Deliver us, pardon our sins for your name sake.

For the sake of your name – you deliver us, you pardon our sins

**Psalms 143:11** – For your name’s sake, Lord, give me life; in your justice lead me out of distress.

For the sake of the name of the Lord – give us life, lead us out of distress

**Isaiah 45:1, 4-6** – Thus says the Lord to his anointed, Cyrus, whose right hand I grasp, subduing nations before him, and making kings run in his service, opening doors before him and leaving the gates unbarred...For the sake of Jacob, my servant, of Israel my chosen one, I have called you by your name giving you a title, though you knew me not. I am the Lord and there is no other, there is no God besides me. It is I who arm you, though you know me not, so that toward the rising of the setting of the sun men may know there is not besides me.

For the sake of Jacob, my servant. For the sake of Israel my chosen one – Cyrus of Persia is given the power and authority to liberate the Israelites.

**Ezekiel 20:44** – And you shall know that I am the Lord when I deal with you thus, for my name's sake, and not according to your evil conduct and corrupt actions, O house of Israel, says the Lord God.

For the sake of God's name – God does not deal with Israel according to their evil conduct or corrupt actions. – Promise made to the people.

In the Old Testament it is primarily God acting for His people. **Why does he act and for the sake of what? What are the major themes?** The majority of the time God acts in a certain way “for the sake of His name”. There are over 10 references to God acting “for the sake of His name”. He is the Great I AM. God keeps His good name and His name is honored and revered because of His justice and mercy. He also shows acts of Mercy because of His servant(s), the most common servant mentioned being King David. God shows mercy because of His servant David. We know from King David's life that he was a great sinner, but also a repentant sinner, that strove to avoid sin and pursue good. If God will show much mercy because of King David, a sinner, imagine the mercy he will show for the sake of the Son of David, a title giving to Jesus, who was without sin. God shows mercy for the sake of His people, for the sake of Jerusalem, how much more mercy will He show to the New Jerusalem the Church that includes all His people, both Jew and Gentile.

**If we have lost peace, can we regain it?** Yes, absolutely. If we lost peace, that means someone or something robbed us of it. If it is from something sinful, we should go to confession to be reunited with God and receive His peace. We should also turn to prayer, especially in front of the Most Blessed Sacrament in adoration or Mass. “The early Church understood the mystery of the Eucharist as underlying the expression ‘peace’. ‘Peace’ very quickly became one of the names for the Eucharistic sacrament, for it is there that God does in fact come to meet us, that He sets us free, that, although we are debtors, guilty in His sight, He takes us into His arms, gives Himself to us. And by leading us to Himself, introducing us into the communion of His Body, by introducing us into the sphere of His love, by feeding us with the same Bread. He also gives us to one another as brothers and sisters. The Eucharist is peace from the Lord.”[63]

**How can we spread peace?** As Jesus sends out his disciples in the upper room, He also sends us to spread His peace. We can take to heart the words from the Gospel of Matthew, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”[64] When it comes to spreading peace, we cannot stand on the sidelines. While it is the role of our pastors to intervene in the political structure and organization of social life, it is our responsibility to bring peace everywhere. Our ways of protecting and bringing peace to the world must have the common good in mind, along with the message of the Gospel and the teachings of the Church.[65] “It is the role of the laity ‘to animate temporal realities with Christian commitment, by which they show that they are witnesses and agents of peace and justice.’[66]”[67] **To what areas in our life can we bring peace? Be specific. What steps can we take to take to achieve this peace? Who can we bring peace to in our life that really needs it?**

### War and Peace – Lesson and Discussion

In the previous lesson, we learned about an inner peace that makes us able to love our neighbors and ourselves. However, when we speak of world peace and ending war, this goes into other factors. While we should all work towards a personal peace, we sometimes have to think in terms of a larger community such as a city, state, or country. On Divine Mercy Sunday, we ask that God's love, forgiveness, and mercy be poured out not only on us, but on the whole world. We ask for His infinite mercy for the many times we have failed as a whole

approach Our Lord, in both word and Sacrament. We should not fear the challenge to holiness, the conversion of heart, and the attentiveness that He calls us to.

**How is the peace that God gives us different from the peace that the world gives us?** God's peace is not a thing, but His very self in the person of Jesus Christ. "For he is our peace, he who made both one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through his flesh...He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father." [60] Usually the world's peace is from a thing or person that is not God. We often place our hope and trust in something that can never reciprocate it or live up to the expectations we set out for them. How many times have we quickly sought peace in something of this world, only to have it ripped away from us just as quickly?

"Christ's peace is different from the peace that the world affords. The world's peace is won at the price of capitulation, of giving in to one's weaknesses. Christ's peace comes from His Cross. And the Cross and the Eucharist have always been mystically one. For that reason the Cross has traditionally been placed just above the altar. In the Holy Eucharist we celebrate the passion, death and resurrection of Christ. Christ invites us to share in this paschal mystery, but not simply at Mass. The mystery we celebrate at Mass is the mystery of faith that we must live daily. This is what the person does when she dies to her weakness (e.g., fear of the miser) and embraces the Cross (of confronting her husband's miserliness and finding a job to earn her own monies)." [61]

**Can someone lose peace?** Yes. When we try and attach our peace to something or someone other than God we can lose sight of the order of our life and thus lose our peace. The hierarchy of values should be in the following order: supernatural, spiritual, intellectual, and material. What are we putting our peace in? While we should still put value in our own capabilities and intellect, our supreme trust and order of our lives should be in the supreme almighty God. "If I often lose peace of mind from definable or indefinable causes, on account of what I have or do, I am too attached to the object, person, or practice, since ordinate affection, being orderly, produces tranquility of mind, which is the essence of peace." [62]

It has been said the God of the Old Testament is a mean and vicious God that only punishes. God is both a God of justice and mercy. The Old Testament is full of references, showing God's loving mercy for the sake of... **How can we show from scripture that God is a God of mercy, even in the Old Testament?** Give some examples of this.

### **For the sake of...(in the New Testament) – Lesson and Discussion**

*"you may have life in his name"*

This lesson should be studied along with its sister lesson – *For the sake of... (Old Testament)*

### **ACTIVITY – For the Sake of...**

**Option 1** - Assign individuals or groups one of the verse below. Make sure all verses are assigned. The individual or group should answer the following question. Is a promise or action made? Who makes the promise or action? Who is it made with or for? It is made for the sake of...?

**Option 2** – Use both the Old Testament and New Testament lesson. Give one group verses from the Old Testament and the other group verses from the New Testament. Have each group answer the questions above and then compare both lists.

**Matthew 5:10** – Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

For the sake of righteousness – Christians are willing to be persecuted. The Christian would rather be persecuted than not practice the virtue of righteousness.

**Matthew 19:12** – Some [eunuchs] are incapable of marriage because they were born so; some, because they were made so by others; some, because they have renounced marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Whoever can accept this ought to accept it.

For the sake of the kingdom of heaven – Some are willing to give up the good of marriage for celibacy.

**Luke 6:22** – Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man.

For the sake of the Son of Man – Christians will be excluded, insulted, denounced and hated.

**Luke 18:29** – And He said to them, “Truly I say to you, there is not one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God.

For the sake of the Kingdom of God – people leave house, wife, brothers, parents, and children. This is lived out by our priests and religious that give up family many times for the Kingdom of God.

**Acts 28:20** – This is the reason, then, I have requested to see you and to speak with you, for it is on account of the hope of Israel that I wear these chains.

For the sake of the hope of Israel – Saint Paul is willing to be imprisoned in chains.

**1 Corinthians 9:22-23** – To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak. I have become all things to all, to save at least some. All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I too may have a share in it.

For the sake of the Gospel – Saint Paul becomes all things to all.

**2 Corinthians 4:11** – For we who live are constantly being give up to death for the sake of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

For the sake of Jesus – Christians are willing to be martyred

**3 John 1:5-7** – Beloved, you are faithful in all you do for the brothers, especially for strangers; they have testified to your love before the church. Please help them in a way worthy of God to continue their journey. For they have set out for the sake of the Name and are accepting nothing from the pagans.”

For the sake of the Name – Christians are willing to go out and evangelized accepting nothing from those they evangelize.

**What is the major shift from the phrase “for the sake of...” in the Old Testament and “for the sake of...” in the New Testament?** In the New Testament there are references of God

Each of these videos are trying to sell peace of mind, whether it is for our vehicle, home, or belongings. But what about our souls? How are we providing our souls with peace?

**Why does Jesus say, “peace be with you” in the Gospel reading?** To understand this, we have to place ourselves in the shoes of the Apostles. They had just witnessed Jesus’ death three days ago. They are scared, alone, and fearing for their lives. Then they see Jesus come through a locked door. With all of these emotions, it is no wonder that Jesus’ first words were of peace. Jesus wanted His disciples to have His peace; peace in knowing that He had risen from the dead and that He was not there as a ghost, but present in body and soul. He also needed them to have the wisdom of God in order to achieve the peace He speaks of during the proclamation of the Kingdom. “The gift of wisdom leads us to peace: the interior peace of the soul who, having tasted God, gives itself to Him without reserve, in complete surrender to His divine will; the serene peace of one who, seeing God in all things, accepts the hardships of life without being disturbed, adoring God’s providence in all; finally, it is the social peace of him who, considering all men in relation to God, as His creatures and His children, loves them all and wishes to live in peace with all.”[57] The Apostles demonstrated this after their experience of seeing the risen Lord and were fully committed to God with an absolute peace in their lives all the way to their deaths.

**Where else do we hear Jesus say “peace be with you”?** At Mass we hear the words from the Gospel of John, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.”[58] When we give the sign of peace to someone at Mass we are not extending our peace, but God’s peace to each other. It is the same peace that was promised to the disciples and fulfilled after the Resurrection as we hear in today’s Gospel reading. The other place we hear of Christ’s peace is in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. When we go to confession and seek God’s forgiveness, the priest says “May God grant you pardon and peace...” It “is usually followed by peace and serenity of conscience with strong spiritual consolation.”[59] Jesus wants us to have peace within Him so that we may follow Him completely.

**Where are the words “Peace be with you” said during the Mass?** During the introductory rite, and before the sign of peace. We should be at peace at Mass, and have no fear as we

is the calm that accompanies agreement of human wills, and is the foundation of every well-ordered society.”[51] “Peace is the tranquility of order.”[52] Order is established by the law and will of God. Those who respect this order fully, possess the plenitude of interior peace; those who depart from it, even in a slight degree, lose their peace in proportion to their deviation from it. Peace is the refreshment and repose of the soul in the midst of the struggles and sorrows of life, but this is not the only reason for which we should try to obtain and possess it. We should desire it above all because it gives glory to God.”[53]

**How can someone obtain peace?** We can first obtain peace through our baptism. “Among the gifts of grace infused at baptism are the peace and joy of the Holy Spirit, which make possible the practice of the Beatitudes, even to loving the cross in suffering for Christ, and the practice of the counsels, even to making a lifetime sacrifice of earthly possessions in imitation of Christ.”[54] At our baptism, we receive the theological gift of charity which is later strengthened in Confirmation and helps us to “love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.”[55] If we practice this gift, the fruits that spring forth are joy, peace, and mercy. We should not put our fears and worries on things of this world, but fully place our trust and love in God. We also should not look at our neighbor with envy or pride but with love, compassion, and a desire to help them as best we can.

St. Teresa of Jesus said, “Holy peace consists in a union with God’s will, of such a kind that no dissension arises between the will of God and the soul, but they are both one – not in words or in desires alone but in works. When a soul finds that by doing something it can serve its Spouse better, it listens to no objections raised by its mind, nor to any fears...but allows faith to act, and considers not its own profit nor its own tranquility.”[56]

**TV AD – Allstate “Mayhem” – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 0:31**

<http://youtu.be/ndHOMYCMaX>

**TV AD – Travelers Insurance Dog – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 1:11**

<http://youtu.be/lk2B8988ws>

acting for the sake of His people but rather His people acting for the sake of God. With the death of His Son, God has given the ultimate and eternal action of mercy, this is the fulfillment of all mercy expressed in the Old Testament. Now the people of God are called to respond to this great mercy out of love. In the New Testament there are references of Christians being willing to act for the sake of the Kingdom of God, for Jesus, for the Gospel. They are willing to act out of virtue when the act for the sake of righteousness or hope.

**What is the importance of the words in the Divine Mercy Chaplet – for the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world?** This can be answered in three parts:

First, in the Old Testament God shows Mercy for the sake of His name, his servants, David, Abraham, Jacob, the People of God, Jerusalem, because of His word, because of His goodness.

Second, if the mercy of God was great in the Old Testament, how much greater is it in the New Testament. If in the Old Testament, He showed mercy because of His name, how much more mercy will He show because of Jesus, His Son the Name above all names. If in the Old, He showed mercy because of His Word, how much more because of the Word made flesh. If in the Old, He showed mercy because of His servants, how much more because of the Suffering Servant[11] If in the Old, He showed mercy because of the house of Israel, or because of Jerusalem, how much more because of the new tribe of Israel, the Holy Apostles. If in the Old, He showed mercy because of His goodness and kindness, how much more because of the goodness and kindness of Jesus Christ, who showed the greatest love by laying down His life. When Jesus said, “It is finished” the mercy of God is complete and available to all, for the sake of His sorrowful Passion. The bestowing of mercy is complete. It is finished. His sorrowful passion is the ultimate reason for giving mercy, greater than any reason in the Old Testament.

The Church is the third and final part of salvation history. **If mercy was given, in its entirety, how is it to be distributed to “us and on the whole world”?** In the Creed we have four parts – I believe in God, I believe in Jesus, I believe in the Holy Spirit, I believe in the Church. The Church is the “pillar and foundation of truth,”[12] and it is the Holy Spirit that “will guide

you to all truth.”[13] Jesus tells us at the Last Supper, just before His Passion, “The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name – he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you”[14]

Jesus makes many promises to us, but two that stand out from the Last Supper discourse are the following: He will give us the gift of the Holy Spirit and that He will be with us until the end of time. Do we remember these promises? When a parent makes a promise to a child, it seems that the child remembers that promise “forever” and holds the parent to that promise no matter what happens. A priest once joked that if a parent promised a child that the family would go to Disney Land, the child would hold the parent to the promise no matter what. Even if the dad was laid off, the house burnt down and the car was repossessed the child would still expect the promise. To the child, the exteriors don’t matter; what matters is the promise. The Church is the fulfillment of His promise.

It is the Church, therefore as the foundation and pillar of truth that distributes and applies God’s Divine Mercy upon all. “The Church is the divinely instituted means of giving grace to all,”[15] and for this reason is necessary for salvation. We can think of the following analogy: A man has enough money to purchase the freedom of a slave. The man knows that he will die, so he deposits the full amount of the money in the bank, setting up an account at the bank for the slave. The slave has only to go to the bank and withdraw the amount from the account set up for him. Jesus is the man. The money deposited is grace and mercy, necessary for salvation. The bank is the Church. Humanity is the slave. The sorrowful passion of Jesus purchased the freedom of each person. Each person has been called to holiness, called to salvation, this call is our account at the bank, our place in the Church, all we have to do is answer the call.

We are saved by Grace, through Faith, acted out in Charity. We are saved by Grace (Passion, Death, Resurrection of Christ), through our faith. We have faith in Christ and the Church He founded as an instrument of Salvation. Grace is the deposit, Faith is the bank. What is the withdraw? We must make the effort to withdraw from the account Jesus has set up for us. We must take seriously the call to Holiness, to live a heroic life of virtue, aided by the Grace of the Sacraments. Each time we go to the Church and receive a Sacrament, we are going to the bank and making a withdraw from the eternal account of salvation.

and examined. During this process of investigation the candidates are considered “Servants of God”. Archbishop Fulton Sheen, Father Emil Kaupan, and Pope John Paul II are all currently in this category. Some of this information is even solicited via the Internet, as is the case for Pope John Paul II.

4. Once the diocesan investigation is completed, all documentation is passed from the diocese to the Holy See and given to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. The Postulator in Rome makes a summary of all the info, which is given to a group of 9 theologians. The theologians examine the summary and cast a vote. If their vote is favorable then the document goes back to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints where members (cardinals and bishops) meet twice a month. If the Congregation’s judgment is in favor of the person, then the person is recommended to the Holy Father.

5. BLESSED...if both a miracle has been attributed to the person’s intercession and the person’s life was declared an example of heroic virtue then the Holy Father decides on beatification of the person. The title “blessed” gives concession or permission for public worship. This means that a Mass can be said in honor of the Blessed publicly, veneration of relics and other devotions can be made.

6. For canonization another miracle is needed, attributed to the intercession of the Blessed and having occurred after his/her beatification. The methods for ascertainment of the affirmed miracle are the same as those followed for beatification. Canonization is understood as the concession of public worship in the Universal Church. Pontifical infallibility is involved. With canonization, the Blessed acquires the title of Saint.

### **Peace – Lesson and Discussion**

*“Peace be with you”*

There are many different types of peace. It could be between people, communities, states, countries, and/or nations. There is peace within oneself. There is also peace between a person and God. While we will touch on all of these factors, keep in mind that all have the same core, which is God, the center of our lives who brings about order and peace.

**What is peace?** “Peace is first of all the absence of conflict. But it is also the serenity experienced because there is no conflict. It

**What is Beatification?** This is the celebration during which the Pope declares a person who has died and gone through the proper process, a Blessed. This person is believed to be in Heaven and is able to provide intercession through the power of God.

**What is Canonization?** Canonization comes from the word canon, which mean list, in this case a catalogue or list of Saints. An ancient list or catalogue of Saints is contained in the Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer I) where the Church lists and asks the intercession of various Saints. Canonization is a “declaration by the Pope that a deceased person is raised to the full honors of the altar, i.e., a saint after previously having been beatified. Two miracles credited to the beatus (feminine: beata) are usually required before canonization to attest the heroic virtue of the saint. Beatification allows veneration of the blessed, canonization requires it. The canonization is celebrated at St. Peter's and is usually followed by a solemn triduum in another church in the city or elsewhere within a limited time.”[50]

**How does one become a saint?** There is a well-defined process in order for someone to be declared a saint. The most basic definition of a saint is a person that the Church declares is in Heaven. There are many steps to go through before a person can be named a saint:

1. Five years must pass from the time of the person's death before their cause can be opened for the canonization process to begin.
2. The Bishop of the Diocese where the person died must begin the process. Faithful in the diocese may request this process from the Bishop. The Bishop however must petition the Holy See (Rome).
3. SERVANT OF GOD...If the Holy See gives what is called a “nulla osta” or permission, the Diocese may begin an investigation process. A group of people in the diocese, a “tribunal” is established by the Bishop and is then responsible for the investigation under the authority of the rules given by the Holy See. This group can summons witnesses to recount facts about how the person exercised the virtues (Theological and Cardinal) to a heroic degree. Any miracles associated to the person's intercession after the person's death is also investigated. All relevant documents and writings are gathered

It is also our job as the Body of the Christ, the Church, to be channels of Grace for others. This is the work of the apostolate; the work of evangelization. This is why Saint Paul suffers for the sake of the Gospel or be chained and imprisoned for the Hope of Israel. This is why Christians will be persecuted, hated, insulted, and even die for the name of Jesus. This is also why priests and religious will give up country and family for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

Since Mercy has been given and deposited in its entirety to the Church, it is now the job of each Christian, in the name of Christ, to give this mercy and grace to others. Each time we our channels of grace and mercy, we further the reparation of sin and salvation of souls. We live out the beatitude, “blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy”[16] and fulfill the words of Christ, “Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father. And whatever you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything of me in my name, I will do it.”[17] Saint John says in today's Gospel, “Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.” It is in his name, that we have life and have “life to the full”[18], living out what we have come to believe.

### **Reconciliation – Lesson and Discussion**

*“Whoever sins you forgive are forgiven”*

The Sacrament of Reconciliation has several common names: Reconciliation, Confession, Conversion, and Penance. In fact, when we receive this Sacrament we are receiving and doing all of these things.

**Is there one “correct” name for this Sacrament?** The Church names two sacraments of healing: the sacrament of Penance and the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. These were instituted by Christ to continue his work of healing and salvation, through the power of the Holy Spirit.[19] We go to the Sacrament of Penance to be healed both from the wounds and effects of the sins we have committed and also to be healed from the habits of sin that are present in our lives. Saint John Paul II called it “a

sacrament of enlightenment...a precious light for the path of perfection.”[20]

Thus, it is also called the Sacrament of Conversion because Jesus is present in the sacrament and calls us to conversion. This is the first step in returning to the Father’s love from whom we strayed by our sins.[21] Thirdly, it is also called the Sacrament of Confession, since one must confess his sins to a priest in order to be forgiven. It is an acknowledgment of praise and thanksgiving confessing God’s mercy toward our sinful habits.[22] It is called the Sacrament of Forgiveness, since the priest, acting in the person of Christ, gives us absolution and assures us that God forgives us and grants us “pardon and peace.”[23][24] Lastly, it is called the Sacrament of Reconciliation, because it brings the sinner back to the full communion with God.

**What is Reconciliation?** Immediately after our Baptism, we are completely sinless. We are wiped clean of any and all sin, including Original Sin. However, we still have concupiscence, which is the desire of our flesh to not fully embrace what God wills, but rather our own selfish desires. Concupiscence leads us to sin. When we fall into sin after our Baptism how can we be cleansed from those sins? Christ instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation in order to remove those sins and let us be sinless again as we were when we were first baptized.[25] Saint Augustine states that there are two types of water in the Church: the water of Baptism, which wipes away original sin, and the water of our tears in Reconciliation, which wipes away our personal sins.

**How soon can a person receive this Sacrament?** The Church has proclaimed for centuries that one can receive the sacrament of Penance at the age of reason.[26] When is the age of reason? The age of reason is when a person can fully understand and distinguish right from wrong, and is intelligent enough to make the choice under his own free will. In practice, this is normally about seven years of age and determined by the Bishop of each diocese.[27]

**Why do we have to go to a priest?** Why can’t we just go to God? We are! Whenever we go to Confession, we are not confessing our sins to another human being; we are approaching a man who stands *in persona Christi* – in the person of Christ. “By his ordination, the priest is granted the sacred power to

the normal five-year waiting period before beginning the cause of beatification and canonization would be waived for John Paul II. [47]

**What is World Youth Day?** World Youth Day, WYD, is a yearly youth celebration that was started by Pope John Paul II as a way to inspire the youth and encourage them to live the teachings of Christ. In 1984 and 1985, he invited the youth of the world to Rome for a Palm Sunday celebration in St. Peter’s Square. With the success of these first two meetings in Rome, the Pope announced the institution of WYD on December 20, 1985. The first official WYD was held in 1986. 1987 brought about a historical tradition, when the second event and first international WYD took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina. WYD is not just a single day but also actually a week of festivities. During the week leading up to the final Mass at World Youth Day, the youth of the world gather in catechesis to learn the teachings of the faith and celebrate in other festivities. The graces flow and the fruits are abundant because it is truly a pilgrimage in which self-sacrifice is an integral part. The official start of WYD is when the cross, which has already traveled the whole world is carried into the host city. There is also an icon of Mary that follows the cross that is a symbol of Mary following Jesus. We as pilgrims, follow the cross to the site of World Youth Day. Next year, WYD is being celebrated in Krakow, Poland. This will be the XXXI World Youth Day and the fourteenth International World Youth Day.[48]

**What is “Theology of the Body”?** From 1979-1984, Blessed Pope John Paul II during his weekly Wednesday audiences wrote and spoke to the audiences of the dignity and beauty of the human person. The compilation of these weekly teachings is called The Theology of the Body. The 'Theology of the Body' is Pope John Paul II's integrated vision of body, soul, and spirit. As he explains, the physical human body has meaning and is capable of revealing answers regarding fundamental questions about our lives and us. His reflections are based on Scripture, starting with Genesis, the Gospels, and the letters of St. Paul. They contain a vision of the human person truly worthy of man. Blessed “Pope John Paul II speaks of who man was in the beginning, who he is now (after original sin), and who he will be in the age to come. He then applies this message to the vocations of marriage and celibacy, in preparation for the Kingdom of Heaven.”[49]

passionate about the Church. This is a video early on in his Papacy calling America to follow Christ.

He gave an extraordinary impetus to Canonizations and Beatifications, focusing on countless examples of holiness as an incentive for the people of our time. He celebrated 147 beatification ceremonies during which he proclaimed 1,338 Blessed; and 51 canonizations for a total of 482 saints. He also made Thérèse of the Child Jesus, a Doctor of the Church.

He survived an assassination attempt in 1981 when a trained assassin was sent to kill him in St. Peter's Square. Pope John Paul II always attributed Our Lady as directing the bullet so that it did not kill him. He later visited his attempted killer in prison and forgave him of his sins. While we are not sure exactly who hired the assassin, there are indications it was someone from a communist government. Pope John Paul II after all helped crush communism, especially in Europe and in his native land of Poland.

**VIDEO - Pope Assassination Attempt - POP CULTURE CONNECTION - 4:07**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34hZPisnIA>

This is the ABC News update on the day of the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II.

He also published five books of his own: "Crossing the Threshold of Hope" (October 1994), "Gift and Mystery, on the fiftieth anniversary of my ordination as priest" (November 1996), "Roman Triptych" poetic meditations (March 2003), "Arise, Let us Be Going" (May 2004) and "Memory and Identity" (February 2005).

On April 2 A.D. 2005, at 9.37 p.m., in the light of Christ risen from the dead, while Saturday was drawing to a close, and the Lord's Day was already beginning, the Octave of Easter and Divine Mercy Sunday, the Church's beloved Pastor, John Paul II, departed this world for the Father.

From that evening until April 8, date of the funeral of the late Pontiff, more than three million pilgrims came to Rome to pay homage to the mortal remains of the Pope. Some of them waited up to 24 hours to enter St. Peter's Basilica.

On April 28, 2005, the Holy Father Benedict XVI announced that

share in the priesthood of Christ. The priest is anointed with the Holy Spirit and given a new and special character that enables him to act *in persona Christi* – in the person of Christ, who is the head of his Church. This means that in the confessional, the priest, by the grace of God, speaks with the very voice of Christ. What we hear in the confessional, then, are Christ's own words of healing and pardon, addressed to our individual circumstances.”[28]

In the Gospel for this week, Jesus gives his first gift to the Church after his resurrection, the gift of forgiving sins. Jesus walks in through locked doors, offers his peace to his disciples, and then shows them his side and hands. At the sight of Jesus, the disciples began rejoicing! Then Jesus says, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them and whose sins you retain are retained.’”[29] A way to remember this passage, John 20:20, is to remember 20/20 vision. We all would like to have perfect vision, which is 20/20 vision. Sin can blind us from seeing Christ. Christ gives his disciples the power to remove that blindness and give us perfect vision again.

**How can a priest forgive sins when only God forgives sins?**

Yes this is true, only God can forgive sins. The priest is acting as the mediator between man and God. He was ordained by the Church and given the power to forgive sins, which Christ gave to his Apostles and their successors, the Bishops. The priest shares in this authority as a result of his ordination, which connects him to the Apostles. When Christ breathed upon the Apostles and gave them the authority to forgive or bind sins, they in turn began to ordain by laying hands upon their disciples making them new priests who could forgive sins to everyone.[30] This priestly succession has been passed down since the time of the Apostles.

It is interesting to note, that the Scribes challenged even Christ himself when He forgave sins when he was in the world. When a crippled man was lowered from the roof of a home to see Jesus, Jesus forgave him of his sins and cured him. “At that, some of the scribes said to themselves, ‘This man is blaspheming.’”[31] The scribes could not believe that Jesus could forgive someone's sins since they knew that only God could forgive sins. Because we, unlike the Scribes, know that Jesus is God, it makes sense to us why and how He could forgive sins. Jesus was also fully

human, and sharing in his humanity he imparts the ability to forgive sins to those who are ordained to share in His priestly ministry.

**How many times do we have to go to Reconciliation?** One of the precepts of the Catholic Church is, that we go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year. However, it is good to note that we should strive to go to confession as frequently as we can, and certainly when we know we have committed a mortal sin. It was said that Saint John Paul II would go to confession on a weekly basis. If a man as holy as Saint John Paul II believed he needed to go to confession that often, then we should closely examine ourselves. One who goes to confession “frequently” is considered to go at least twice a month.

**Why should I go to Confession often? What are the effects of going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation?** The effects of going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation are magnificent for our souls! “The whole power of the sacrament of Penance consists in restoring us to God’s grace and joining us with him in an intimate friendship.”[32] By going to confession with a contrite and sorrowful heart for the sins we commit, Reconciliation gives us “spiritual resurrection” in that our souls were sentenced to death from our sins (both mortal and venial) and are given new life.[33] The Sacrament also helps us understand ourselves better, and gives us strength and grace to fight certain sins that constantly tempt us throughout our lives. Through this sacrament, “genuine self-knowledge is increased, Christian humility grows, bad habits are corrected, spiritual neglect is resisted, the conscience is purified, the will is strengthened, a salutary self-control is attained and grace is increased.”[34]

It also reconciles us back to the Church. When we are in the state of Mortal Sin, we are forbidden to receive the Most Blessed Sacrament, the Eucharist.[35] It is only when we go to the Sacrament of Penance and reconcile ourselves that we can obtain graces and receive Jesus in the Eucharist. We are strengthened by the graces God has given us by the Sacrament of Penance. We reconnect with the Body of Christ, all of us who are still alive, and those who have died in the grace of God.[36]

Finally, in this sacrament, we place ourselves before God in anticipation, in a certain way, the judgment, which we all face immediately when we die. We are still living and, by living, we

Praised be Jesus Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters,

We are all still grieved after the death of our beloved Pope John Paul I. And now the Cardinals have named a new bishop of Rome. They called from a distant land ... away, but always so close to the communion in faith and Christian tradition. I was afraid to receive this nomination, but I did it in the spirit of obedience to Our Lord Jesus Christ and in total confidence to his Mother, Mary Blessed.

I do not know if I well in your ... our Italian. If I'm wrong correct me. And so I introduce myself to you all, to confess our common faith, our hope, our trust in the Mother of Christ and the Church, and also to begin again on this path of history and the Church, with the help of God and with the help of men.

**VIDEO - Election of Pope Benedict XVI – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 2:28**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26HdtrbekK>

**What did he do while he was Pope?** His papacy was one of the longest of the popes in Church history lasting nearly twenty-seven years. In that time, He made 104 pastoral visits outside Italy and 146 within Italy. As bishop of Rome he visited 317 of the city's 333 parishes. His love for young people brought him to establish the World Youth Days. He had more meetings than any of his predecessors with the People of God and the leaders of nations. More than 17,600,000 pilgrims participated in the General Audiences held on Wednesdays, not counting other special audiences and religious ceremonies [more than 8 million pilgrims during the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 alone], and the millions of faithful he met during pastoral visits in Italy and throughout the world. We must also remember the numerous government personalities he encountered during 38 official visits, 738 audiences and meetings held with Heads of State, and 246 audiences and meetings with Prime Ministers.

**VIDEO- “follow Christ” by John Paul II – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 5:26**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpniUToYf8>

Many of us only saw Blessed Pope John Paul II as a frail and elderly man. However, even in his old age he was fiery and

His main role was studying in Rome, and when he was home, to be with the youth. He was the chaplain to the university students. In less than twenty years into his priesthood, Pope Paul VI named him Archbishop of Krakow. Three years later he was named a cardinal. Then, with the sudden death of Pope John Paul I, the cardinals elected him Pope at the Conclave of October 16, 1978.

**How is the Pope chosen?** The process of selecting a Pope has changed somewhat over the years. In the early church, Popes were chosen by an election conducted by the Roman Church, consisting of twenty-four priests and deacons who would vote. Later the Pope was selected by an election by the people of Rome. This is how Pope Gregory the Great was unanimously elected by the religious and lay people in Rome. Today, the Pope is selected by the College of Cardinals in a process where they meet and deliberate on whom to elect as the next Pope.

When a Pope dies, the church will take his bishop's ring and smash it with a hammer as a formal symbol of the end his reign. The Cardinals under the age of eighty then gather together and are locked in the Sistine Chapel to discuss, pray, and determine who should be the next Vicar of Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The election is done in by secret ballot and requires at least a two-thirds majority for a Pope to be named. If they are unable to reach this after a certain number of ballots, they can move to a simple majority (more than fifty percent). Up to two ballots are taken each day. If at the end of a ballot they don't come to an agreement, the ballots will be burned and black smoke will be seen coming from the chimney to indicate to the faithful outside that there has not been an election yet. Once a Pope has been elected, the ballots are wetted and then burnt which causes the smoke to turn white to indicate that there is a new pope. They will also start ringing all of the Church bells.

Pope John Paul II was the first non-Italian Pope in 455 years! He was also one of the youngest to be elected Pope in recent history and eventually had one of the longest tenures as Pope.

**VIDEO - Election of Pope John Paul II - POP CULTURE CONNECTION - 5:54**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4K\\_iBXbE3U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4K_iBXbE3U)

In his first speech to the Church he spoke the words of Christ "Do Not Be Afraid!" The translation of his speech is the following:

are still given the choice between life and death. "In converting to Christ through penance and faith, the sinner passes from death to life and 'does not come into judgment.'[37]"[38]

**Do we need to go to Confession if we only have venial sins?** We do not need, nor are we required, to go to confession if we only have venial sins on our soul. However, it is still prudent to go to the Sacrament if we feel our venial sins are habitual ones so that we may receive advice, counsel, and strength to stop committing even venial sins. Venial sins add up like drops of water in a bucket, the bucket needs to be emptied and is done so through Confession. Another way to think of the seriousness of venial and moral sins is the example of bugs on a windshield. If we were to go on a long drive over several hours, eventually there would be many bugs that would be splattered on the windshield. Although these bugs are small, eventually the small bugs add up in number and obstruct the vision of the driver. Venial sins are like these small bugs that begin to obstruct the moral vision of the Christian. When need to get out of the car and wash the windshield, we need to go into the confessional and wash the soul. Using the same analogy, if we were driving the car and were to hit a large animal (mortal sin) we would have to stop immediately and fix the damage done to the car, just as when we commit mortal sin, we immediately go to confession.

**What if we are not sorry for our sins when going to confession?** One of the requirements of receiving full pardon and peace from the Sacrament is to be genuinely sorry for our sins. If we do not have contrition, or sorrow for the sins we have committed against God, then we are not forgiven of those sins. [39]

**What if we leave something out knowingly?** Then it would be as if the confession never happened and we are not forgiven of our sins. We cannot hold anything back from God. If we are truly sorry, we must go to him full of humility and seek forgiveness for everything we have done to offend him.

**What if we forget to confess something?** If we truly forget to confess something before we receive absolution, we are still forgiven of that sin. If it is a Mortal Sin, it is good practice at your next Confession to confess that sin. The sin is forgiven, but the graces you will build up are invaluable. To make sure one knows all their sins, they should do a good examination of conscience before going to the Sacrament of Penance. We should

take the proper time to recall the times we had offended God so we can always make a good and holy confession.

**What if a priest tells someone my sins?** The priest is bound by Canon Law to never say a single word that is spoken in the confessional. Even if the priest was put in court and sworn under oath, he is forbidden to say anything. If he were to say anything from the confessional, he will be stripped of his priestly duties, automatically excommunicated from the Church, and he could only be brought back into the Church by the authority of the Pope. It is also important to note that most priests who have been hearing confessions for any time have already heard everything before. There's nothing that is going to "shock" them or cause them not forgive you. Also, many priests hear dozens if not hundreds of confessions in any given week. This is on top of their regular schedule, so to remember a specific person's confession would be extremely difficult for them. Most priests in fact will tell you that they can't even remember anything that they hear in the confessional. Since they are there in the person of Christ, it's not them that the person is really talking to – it's Christ himself – so there is no reason for them to remember what is said.

**Who does the priest or even the Pope go to hear their confession?** The Pope has a specific confessor that hears his confession. He can also go to any other ordained priest, bishop, or cardinal to have his confession heard. This is the same with any other priest. They must go to another brother priest to have their sins heard and forgiven.

**VIDEO – Pope Francis goes to Confession – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 1:15**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BKHKmEtpWa>

In an act of humility, Pope Francis recently became the first pope to be seen publicly going to confession.

**Activity - Bandana Skit**

This activity is great for medium to large groups (15+ people). Also, make sure to have at least five (5) bandanas or scarves.

Ask for two volunteers, one must be male. (Preferably have the other be a female since you will need one more male volunteer for this activity later.) Once you have them up, tell the male volunteer he will be playing the role of Jesus, and the other

**What did St. Thomas do after he saw Jesus?** After witnessing the resurrection of Jesus, Thomas traveled the greatest distance of any of the Apostles away from Jerusalem. He is responsible for bringing Christianity Eastward to present day Afghanistan, Syria, and as far as India. He was a martyr in India, and his Shrine is still there today. To this day, the western and southern part of India is heavily Catholic, while the northern and eastern parts are Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim.

While Thomas gets a bad rep for "doubting" Jesus' resurrection, his emphatic statement, "My lord and my God" clearly shows his doubt was removed. He traveled further than any other Apostle and is a great witness for all of us who have any doubts in our faith to no longer doubt, but to proclaim Jesus Christ as our king and our Lord. In the Gospel's, there is a simple prayer uttered by the father of a son who was healed by Jesus. The Father says, "I do believe, help my unbelief." [46] This is also the prayer of Saint Thomas and the prayer of every Christian. We believe, but yet we struggle with unbelief. We know, love and serve God, yet God is still a mystery, we prefer other things to the love of God at times and we serve self rather than God. This one short prayer sums up the desire of our hearts and the reality of our thoughts and actions. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

**Saint John Paul II – Lesson and Discussion**

Today we celebrate with the whole Church, the sanctification of Saint John Paul II. Before becoming Pope, his name was Karol (which in English translates to Charles) Wojtyla. He was born on May 18, 1920 near Krakow, Poland. He was the youngest of three but had a troubled, yet strong, faithful family. It was troubled because by the age of twenty-one, all of his siblings and both parents had died. He soon threw himself into his studies for the priesthood and declared that Mary and the Church would be his new parents. He attended the seminary, underground in hiding, constantly under threat of the Nazis who were occupying Poland at the time. He was ordained a priest in 1946.

**MOVIE – Karol: the Man who becomes Pope - POP CULTURE CONNECTION**

This is one of the best movies on the life of Pope John Paul II. If time allows, it would be great to watch the whole movie in conjunction with this lesson.

“Surely it was not by chance that this chosen disciple was missing in the first place? Or that on his return he heard, that hearing he doubted, that doubting he touched, and that touching he believed? It was by divine dispensation and not by chance that things so fell out. God’s mercy worked wonderfully, for when that doubting disciple touched his Master’s wounded flesh he cured the wound of our disbelief...So this doubting disciple, who actually touched, became a witness to the reality of the resurrection.”[41]

**Why does he doubt?** Can we honestly blame Thomas for doubting? In just seventy-two hours, he was eating supper with Jesus, and then saw Him arrested, tried, and sentenced to death. Thomas knew Jesus was dead. Now, his friends were telling him that Jesus was alive again. It is understandable for Thomas to question and even doubt that this could be true. It is through faith that we believe Jesus is God, and the Catholic Church is the one true Church He founded, and God is guiding it through the Holy Spirit. God permitted Thomas to doubt because as St. Gregory says, we should be strengthened in humble belief in the Resurrection of Christ. “When Jesus did come to Thomas all fears and doubts were removed.”[42] **When have there been times you doubted? When was a time when something was “too good to be true”? Discuss a time when you may have doubted but later found out what you doubted to be true.**

**Why did Jesus come back again for Thomas?** It was a merciful act of bursting through Thomas’ disbelief and doubts. It was so Thomas may fully embrace everything Jesus was, is, and ever will be. The Gospel of John is also speaking to us when Jesus says, “Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed”[43] We should never doubt that Jesus is our Lord, who died, and rose again. If we believe this, we will be blessed as Jesus promised.

**Why did he proclaim, “My lord and my God”?** St. Thomas, who is referred as the “doubter”, makes the most complete affirmation of Christ’s nature in all of the Scriptures.[44] These five simple words were confessed and speak of the true divinity of Jesus. Thomas through his faith has professed that Jesus indeed is the Son of God. “His faith springs not so much from the evidence of seeing Jesus as from an immense sorrow. It isn’t so much the proof, as his love, that leads him to adoration and to renewing his apostolate.”[45]

person (for the sake of this sheet I will identify the volunteer as a girl) will play the role of an everyday person.

Have Jesus be holding something, a box of Oreos, some candy, and a toy, something visual that will represent all the graces Jesus wants to give us. Have the girl go and take the item and give Jesus a handshake, a high five, or something to show a connection. Now, have her hand back the gift to Jesus.

Bandana #1 (Ears) – Now, have the girl face the audience. Explain to the audience that she had been hanging around with some new friends and she was over hearing some juicy gossip. She was also listening to inappropriate music, or possibly she has been listening to music 24/7 and will never take out her ear buds. Then, tie a bandana around the girl’s ears. \*The best way to do this is to start at the bottom and tie it at the top of her head. It will look like she has a toothache.

Once bound, explain that Jesus speaks to us in silence. Hearing false information and negative messages can make us deaf to hearing God. If we have our music constantly on or are only listening to the latest gossip or music we are not focused on trying to listen to God.

Bandana #2 (mouth) - Now explain to everyone that since she has been listening to all this gossip and music, she started spreading the rumors and lies about people. She may also have been sarcastic at times, (explain that the word “sarcasm” means tearing of the flesh with words), and started using inappropriate language around family, friends, and even strangers. Then, tie a bandana around the girl’s mouth.

Explain that Jesus does not want us to spread lies, falsehoods, or speak badly about others. We should “speak of God and/or about God”. By speaking falsely, we lose trust from people. By speaking vulgar language, we lose the vocabulary to express how we truly feel.

Bandana #3 (eyes) - Next, tell the audience that the girl was out at the mall with her friends (or in the school hallways, or any place of you choose that’s relevant) and she sees a really, REALLY attractive guy. She gives a very long stare, looking at the boy in an objectifying way. Then, go ahead and blindfold her eyes.

Explain that when we look at a man or woman as an object we are looking at them with Lust. We do not see their divine soul radiating from them, but only a means by which our sexual pleasures might be fulfilled.

Before going to the next bandana, mention to the audience how quickly she has sinned in so many ways. Also explain that now, even with these small slip-ups, she can't see, hear, or speak to Jesus.

Bandana #4 (hands) - Tell the audience that while at the mall, the girl decided to shop lift from her favorite clothing store. She knew it was not the right thing to do, but she really wanted it and could not afford it. Next, bind her hands with the bandana.

Explain that now she has moved into mortal sin. She knew what she was doing was wrong, stealing, which is a grave sin, and she freely chose to do it anyway. This is when she needs to go to confession immediately, but she doesn't.

Bandana #5 (feet) - Tell the audience that hanging out with this new group of people has led her down the wrong path. Instead of building up the Church, it has led her to breakdown the Church, breakdown her faith, and she begins to doubt the Catholic Church. Then, bind her feet at her ankles.

Explain how quickly sin can become a slippery slope. Satan wants nothing more than to make us think he doesn't exist, that our sins don't matter. If we don't think Satan exists, and that there are no consequences of our actions, then do we even believe God exists? The truth is, God does exist, and our actions have consequences here in this world and after we die.

Now, ask for another male volunteer. Once chosen, have them play the role of the priest. Now, read the Gospel of John 20:20-23. Explain that the person playing the priest is the mediator to Jesus.

Next, have the girl face the priest and begin talking for the girl as if she is in the confessional. As you begin confessing one of the five sins, have the priest take off that particular bandana. (\*It is sometimes easier to start at the feet and go up) After all the bandanas have been removed, ask the girl how she feels. Then let her go to Jesus and take the object again as a sign of her unity with Christ again.

Conclusion: There are two stories that could be used here. One is the story of St. Faustina going to her superior stating she was seeing and speaking to Jesus. At first, her priest did not believe her. He asked her to ask Jesus what was the last sin he confessed. She went to Jesus and He said, "I don't know. He has already gone to the Sacrament of Penance." This shows God's love and mercy to us and he not only forgives our sins but forgets them as well.

Alternately, someone may ask, "Why do I need to keep going to confession if I keep having to confess the same sin?" Tell them this story: There were two brothers, one was in the army as a nurse and the other was a marine on the frontline. The marine was shot in the arm and badly wounded. He goes to see his brother. His brother, the nurse, goes and cleans him up, bandages him, and gets him back to full health. Once in full health the marine has to go back to the front line to fight again. Is there a chance he could get shot again? Yes! Is there a chance he won't? Of course! This is what it is like for us in our spiritual warfare. We get wounded from sin, and we need to go to the doctor to clean our wounds, which is Jesus in the Sacrament of Penance. If the brother got shot again, would his brother the nurse reject helping him again? Of course not! Neither does Jesus. He is always waiting for us to come and be healed from our sins.

### **Saint Thomas the Apostle – Lesson and Discussion**

*"Unless I see the mark of the nails...I will not believe."*

**Who is Thomas?** Thomas was one of the twelve Apostles. He was known as a "twin" but we do not know anything of the other twin. He is mentioned in all four gospels, but it is in John's Gospel that he has pivotal roles. First, when Jesus went back to see and raise Lazarus from the dead, Thomas knowing their lives would be endangered, spoke up to the others and said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him"[40] He also spoke up at the Last Supper asking how and where Jesus was going. Of course, the climax of his story in the Gospel was his doubting Jesus rose from the dead because he was not present the first time Jesus appeared to the other Apostles.

### **Why was he not in the upper room with the other apostles?**

There is no specific reason, written or known, why Thomas was not present when Jesus first appeared. St. Gregory the Great, however, gives an explanation of why Thomas would be missing.