

Divine Mercy vs. Diabolical Mercy

Homily of Bishop Silva during the Rededication of the Diocese of Honolulu to The Divine Mercy

From The Wanderer Online Daily Website

April 22, 2015

(Editor's Note: Bishop Larry Silva of Honolulu on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 12, rededicated his diocese to the Divine Mercy. The rededication took place at a Sunday evening Mass at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, Pearl City, Oahu. He first dedicated the diocese to the Divine Mercy on Sunday, April 23, 2006, at Star of the Sea Church, Honolulu. His rededication homily, he said, contrasts "Divine Mercy with diabolical mercy" — "Satan has kind of twisted it...to say" that "God is so merciful, who cares if you sin?" Below are the texts of Bishop Silva's rededication prayer and his homily at the Divine Mercy Sunday Mass at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church. Bishop Silva was ordained bishop of Honolulu on July 21, 2005.)

+ + +

Homily of the Most Rev. Larry Silva

Bishop of Honolulu

Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday) April 12, 2015

Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, Pearl City, Oahu

Of course we are here to celebrate Divine Mercy, that unbelievable, overwhelming, magnanimous, patient, and loving attribute of God that pursues us like a Hound of Heaven to keep us close to him when we have strayed away and sinned.

It is a mercy that we see so clearly in today's gospel. Jesus first encounters his closest friends who abandoned him in his greatest hour of need, including three who fell asleep when he begged them to pray for him, and one who denied he even knew him, not once, not twice, but three times.

His first words to them are, "Peace be with you!" Instead of breathing out well deserved scoldings, he breathes on them the gift of the Holy Spirit. Instead of chiding them for being so untrustworthy, he entrusts a mission to them, his own mission of forgiving sins. When one of them who was not with them when he first appeared expressed the greatest doubt and skepticism, he appears to him and playfully challenges him to satisfy his doubts.

This is the Divine Mercy that led Jesus to forgive those who cruelly and unjustly condemned him to a horrifying death by crucifixion; that shocked a disciple who thought he understood its depths when he suggested it meant forgiving seven times by telling him that it was seventy times seven times that was closer to the reality.

This is the Divine Mercy that spared not even the Son of God to give his life so that wayward humanity could be saved.

This is the Divine Mercy expressed in a father who had been as much as told to drop dead by his wayward son, yet who welcomes him back with great festivity when his son

shows even a bit of remorse. Such mercy is so difficult to comprehend, yet so very real.

Then there is diabolical mercy. Recently I read the following as a reaction to those who insist on the religious freedom to believe that true marriage can only be between one man and one woman.

“To my Christian friends . . . the Jesus of the Bible was a man who, whenever he countered individuals accused of some unpardonable sin, usually sat down and broke bread with them. He offered grace, forgiveness, and love”
[Joel Mathis, Honolulu Star-Advertiser, April 5, 2015, p. E6.]

It is the nature of the devil to take the truth and to twist it to his perverse purposes. Here the author — and many others in our culture today — point out the truth of Jesus’ magnanimous mercy, but they presume that Jesus’ mercy does not demand conversion from sin. They presume that because Jesus is so merciful and so loving, he really does not care whether we sin or not. He is blind to sin, if he believes there is such a thing at all, because he is just so blindly in love with every person.

Such twisted thinking takes the truth and distorts it so that it is no longer the truth, but just the opposite. If we follow this path of thinking to its logical conclusion, then we have to ask what significance Jesus has anyway — or any kind of savior for that matter

If there is no sin from which we need to be saved, then why bother approaching the throne of mercy? If grace is so cheap that we can snap our fingers at God to order it up, then why in the world did Jesus bother to suffer so much for us? Why was he willing to be so wounded, and from those wounds to pour out water and blood, to wash us and nourish us, if such a washing was never really needed in the first place?

Why did Jesus not order Sr. Faustina to direct the painting of his portrait with a wink in his eye, winking at every sin and perversion we could engage in because it really does not matter?

Instead Jesus ordered Sr. Faustina to have his portrait painted with a huge wound in his heart, a wound that bleeds because it is so broken by what sin has done to us; a wound that invites us to approach it so that our filth can be washed in the water as in an ocean of mercy.

Perhaps this is why the number of people who regularly confess their sins today is so low. We have been deceived by a diabolical notion of mercy that convinces us that God’s love is so immense that there is no possibility of punishment. Perhaps this is why so few people approach the Lord Jesus to worship him, to cry out, “My Lord and my God,” since if there is no need for a Savior, then why give any time to Jesus?

Satan, our ancient enemy, is so clever. He does not portray Jesus as a harsh judge who is ready to condemn us for the slightest transgression of the law. The devil takes the truth of the immensity of God’s mercy and distorts it to convince us that there is nothing

we could do that would need the washing of mercy at all, because Jesus simply does not care if we sin or not.

This is diabolical mercy. It is this diabolical mercy that Divine Mercy wants to destroy. Jesus said, "Repent, and believe in the gospel!" But if he does not care if we sin, why should he care if we repent?

Divine Mercy knows very well that we are sinners, that we allow ourselves to be deceived as easily as our first parents allowed themselves to be deceived.

Divine Mercy sees very clearly our filth and our anemia, and washes us with water and blood from the wounded side of Jesus, not to affirm us in our sinfulness, but to love us into conversion.

Divine Mercy does sit down and break bread with the greatest of sinners, but never to overlook our sins, but rather to allow Jesus' love to so wound our hearts that we want to repent. He opens his heart to us sinners so that we will no longer consider God's commandments as burdensome but as our path to freedom and joy.

There is a great struggle these days between the subtle but destructive diabolical mercy, which winks at sin, and the Divine Mercy, which looks piercingly at sin and invites the sinner to turn away and to be washed in the eternal flow of water and blood that comes forth from the wounded side of Jesus.

We can so easily be led astray. This is why it is so important to always recognize our need for a Savior and to cry out to him, "My Lord and my God." This is why it is essential not to be afraid but to always cry out, **"Jesus, I trust in you!"**