

## Divine Mercy Sunday

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This weekend we celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday. "Divine Mercy is a devotion to Jesus Christ associated with the apparitions of Jesus to Saint Faustina Kowalska. The venerated image under this Christological title refers to what Kowalska's diary describes as "God's loving mercy" towards all people, especially for sinners. Kowalska was granted the title "Secretary of Mercy" by the Holy See in the Jubilee Year of 2000. Kowalska reported a number of apparitions during religious ecstasy which she wrote in her diary, later published as the book *Diary: Divine Mercy in My Soul*. The two main themes of the devotion are to trust in Christ's endless goodness, and to show mercy to others acting as a conduit for God's love towards them."

When Saint John Paul II instituted this Feast, he remarked that our world needs to know the great love Jesus has for us and that he wants to forgive our sins more than we want to have them forgiven. So many times in our lives we hold on so tight to the sins of our past. The devil uses these sins to beat us down and cause us to start to believe that our sins are not forgivable. When this is true we start to give up on ourselves and to believe the lie that we are defined by our sins. Because of our poor image of ourselves we begin to look for others to blame for our pain that we hold inside. We begin to look for and point out others who we believe are "worse than us" and in that we do not look so bad. Jesus reminds us that we will be judged as we judge others, and forgiven as we forgive others.

When you and I allow the blood that flowed from the heart of Jesus on the cross to wash away our sins and the water of regeneration restore us to our dignity as God's children, we are truly set free. We know that the only sin that Jesus will not forgive is the one we do not ask forgiveness for. The worst sin man ever committed was the nailing of the Son of God to a tree, nothing we can do ever can measure up to this. From the cross, Jesus looked down and asked his Father to forgive them. If He asked the Father to forgive those who betrayed Him, who falsely accused him, who beat Him and ridiculed Him, who nailed Him to the cross, the most painful death the Romans could devise, what could we ever do that would permanently separate us from His love. From the Cross Jesus knew all of us in His divine mind. He knew when we would betray Him and would not love Him, our brothers and sisters, and yes even ourselves as He has called us. He looked down from the cross and said I die for you anyway. "What greater love has a man than this, to lay down his life for a friend." I believe that some of the most loving words we can hear are "I forgive you." I know what you have done but I love you anyway. One of the great joys of my priesthood has been through the Sacrament of Reconciliation those words Jesus speaks through me, that we all crave to hear, "And I forgive you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." I have seen so many tears of joy flow as people have heard these words, knowing they have been set free from the burdens of their past, and know they have been and are loved through it all.

This wonderful feast of Divine Mercy reminds us that we are loved, that Jesus has not left us in our sins. From the cross Jesus restores us to the dignity of being the sons and daughters of God the most high, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit. This Divine Mercy Sunday we are called to leave our sins at the foot of His cross, and rise with Him to a newness of life. We are called to look up to Jesus and say, I trust in you, I trust in your promise, and I trust in your love for me.

May God bless you and keep you safe.

Fr Tim