

## **From the Homily Library of Fr. Callistus Iyorembor**

### **Second Sunday of Easter/Divine Mercy Sunday - Year B – April 11, 2021**

Today we celebrate the Second Sunday of Easter. The Second Sunday is also designated as Divine Mercy Sunday. This day was instituted by Pope John Paul II not long before he died. Pope John Paul II is said to have a strong devotion to Sr Faustina Kawoska, a young nun who died in Krakow in 1938. Sr. Faustina Kawoska is said to have been gifted with extraordinary visions and experiences of Jesus.

The most famous vision Faustina had was the vision of Jesus revealing his Sacred Heart to her from which came rays of light - red and white which she interpreted as the radiant force of the Divine Mercy. The white light signifies baptism, and the red light signifies the blood of the Eucharist. (Lord have Mercy, through my fault...two ways in which the mercy of God is extended to us.)

Pope John Paul II who canonized Sr. Faustina, made this devotion known throughout the world. Some of you have engaged in a nine-day Novena leading to this day. I pray your prayers will be very fruitful. There are people all over the world who pray this chaplet of the Divine Mercy, pledging our trust in the Mercy of Jesus. Today we will say together the Divine Mercy prayer together as contained in our bulletin during the Prayers of the Faithful. I invite you to consider saying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy every day. It's a very short but effective prayer. The mercy of God comes through for us. The mercy of God is extended to us.

#### **Divine Mercy/Forgiveness of Sins**

There is no greater manifestation of the Divine Mercy than the forgiveness of Sin. Our Gospel passage today lays out this truth with admirable clarity. The apostles are in the Upper Room in Jerusalem and fear is their ruling passion at the moment; understandable fear because Jesus - their

master - has just been crucified. It's the most frightening death someone could ever die. They were afraid the same fate might be awaiting them. They are behind locked doors.

### **Despite Locked Doors**

Despite the locked doors, Jesus came in and stood in their midst. Jesus makes his way through these locked doors; this is an important lesson for all of us. So much is packed into it. The resurrected Jesus lives at a new pitch of existence - beyond all human limitations of space and time and death and locked doors.

The resurrected Jesus is in our midst right now.

- ✓ *"Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in their midst."* When I say *"the Lord be with you"*; you respond *"and with Your Spirit."* You are acknowledging the Presence of the Risen Christ among us here in Church.
- ✓ Each time you gather in your homes for prayer, always remember that Jesus is right there with you.

Then we hear, Jesus came and stood among them and said *"Peace be with you; Shalom."* What is God's peace? It a sum of what God wants for His people. It means physical wellbeing, spiritual wellbeing. It means everything good at every level. When people ask me to pray for them... At the conclusion of our Easter season Masses, the celebrant says, *"Go in peace. Alleluia! Alleluia!"*

Then comes the extraordinary commission. The resurrected Jesus breathes on them saying, *"receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive they are forgiven, whose sins you retain, they are retained."* In other words, Jesus' mercy is communicated to His disciples who, in turn, are commissioned to communicate it to the whole world. This is the foundation of the sacrament of Penance which has existed in the church from that day to the present moment.

Confession is the privilege vehicle of the Divine Mercy extended to us.

Then we hear the story of doubting Thomas. This is special to us because our Parish is named after Thomas the Apostle. Thomas is not present during Jesus' first visit; when he returns, he is told that Jesus came. He doubts: "*Unless I touch, I refuse to believe.*" So, Jesus appears a second time and says, "*Thomas, feel the nails touch my side, doubt no longer.*" Thomas makes the most profound expression of faith expressed in his words, "*My Lord and my God.*" When I raise the Body of Christ/Chalice during each Mass, I say those words *My Lord and my God*. You, too, can say those words in your heart today. So, we say Thomas finally he gets it.

How is it that Thomas doesn't get it the first time? Because he was not in the church; he was away from the 11; away from Church. When Thomas returns to be with the 11, he gets it.

Where do we find the Christ? God finds us in all kinds of places, but the privileged place where God finds us is in the Church community scripture, Sacraments, Liturgy, above all the Eucharist.

Don't stay away from church. One day in your house is better than a thousand elsewhere.

Some people despise their moments of skepticism, doubt, unbelief, failings. Don't do that! They might be leading you to your moment of grace.