

In Today's Gospel

On Good Friday, the Earth shuttered. The unimaginable has happened. God died. All of history has led to this moment. All of man's sin has come to this point. Man has so utterly rejected God, has so utterly turned his back on his creator that without knowing him, we put the very author of life to death.

From noon until 3:00 on that Friday, darkness fell over the land as Jesus hung on the cross. At 3:00, Jesus cried out "'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which is translated, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" (Mk 15:34) With that, Jesus breathed out his last and died. At that moment, the Earth shook, rocks were split, and the veil of the Temple sanctuary was torn from top to bottom. Prior to this, God was present with his people in the sanctuary. Now, the sanctuary was empty. For the next three days, the Earth lay in silence. The Earth mourned the loss of her creator.

On the third day, Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James, and Salome came to the tomb so that they could tend to the body of their Lord, but Jesus was not there. In today's gospel, we are present with those holy women as the reality of Christ's resurrection begins to dawn on them. The old darkness begins to fade away; a new light has risen, the light of Christ.

Let us rise. Let us go to the tomb. Let us behold the place where Christ lay and declare with the Angels, "He has risen," and then, let us go out into the light of Christ.

Divine Mercy Sunday

During the 1930s, our Lord appeared to a simple nun in Poland. During this time, Jesus gave Sr. Maria Faustina of the Blessed Sacrament a series of private revelations, which she recorded in her diary. In those revelations, Jesus repeated the message that God is merciful and forgiving and that we, too, must show mercy and forgiveness. Jesus instructed Sr. Faustina to spread the message of his Divine Mercy throughout the world, the message that God's mercy is greater than our sin. If we call out to him, no matter how great our sin, he will respond to us in mercy.

Since her death in 1938, devotion to the Divine Mercy has spread throughout the world. There are three main themes to this devotion. Those themes can best be recalled by simply remembering ABC: A) Ask for God's mercy. With the spirit of repentance for our sins, let us approach God and ask him to pour his mercy on us and on the whole world. B) Be merciful. When we receive God's mercy, we are to let it flow through us into the world. We must act with mercy towards those we encounter. C) Completely trust in Jesus. The more we trust in Jesus, the more we will allow his grace to enter our hearts.

On April 30, 2000, Pope John Paul II canonized St. Faustina and designated the Second Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday. This coming Sunday, we will join with Catholics around the world in offering our praise to the God of Mercy. The image of the Divine Mercy will be available for veneration at both St. Mary and St. Richard churches, and we will pray the Chaplet of Mercy following Mass.

Those who take part in these devotions to the Divine Mercy, with a spirit that is completely detached from the affection for sin, and who also fulfill the usual conditions, will receive a plenary indulgence. The conditions to receive a plenary indulgence, in addition to performing the act (as stated above), are: 1) Go to sacramental confession within 20 days, before or after the act. 2) Receive the Holy Communion, preferably on the day of or the day before or after the act. 3) Pray for the intentions of the Pope.

Pamphlets are available at the church's' entrances for those who would like to pray the Chaplet of Mercy or those who would like to make the complete Novena to the Divine Mercy.

Happy Easter!