

Second Sunday of Easter (or Sunday of Divine Mercy)  
April 23, 2017

Before I reflect of the readings for the Second Sunday of Easter, I want to look at the importance of Divine Mercy Sunday. Divine Mercy Sunday is a Catholic feast instituted by Pope Saint John Paul II, and is celebrated every year on the Octave of Easter. The Octave of Easter is the eighth day of Easter, or, in other words, the Sunday after Easter Sunday. Since the date of Easter changes every year, the date of Divine Mercy Sunday does as well. Pope John Paul II extended the feast of Divine Mercy Sunday to the entire church when he canonized Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska on April 30, 2000 which was Divine Mercy Sunday for that year. The Holy Father chose the Octave of Easter as the date for Divine Mercy Sunday because that is the day after the Divine Mercy Novena ends.

A Reflection on DIVINE MERCY



What is mercy? Is Mercy compassion, pity, leniency, sympathy, kindness, understanding, forgiveness?

There are many forms of mercy. I think of mercy as something that someone asks for when they have wronged someone. They ask for compassion for a lenient punishment, or as a way to be forgiven. It could be a family member or your child or a friend or even a stranger. When the law is involved and there is a trial, sometimes you hear the phrase “to throw

themselves on the mercy of the court”. In this case, mercy is up to a judge and the judge is confined to rules as to what sort of punishment he can hand down to the person on trial. Court procedures are in place with high and low limits for sentencing for different types of criminal acts. Though the judge may have compassion and sympathy toward the person on trial, he cannot be forgiving. Some sort of punishment must be given.

Now DIVINE MERCY is different. It comes from God himself. It is more than pity or sympathy. It is complete forgiveness. It is total clemency for all the sins and wrong that you have done, knowingly or unknowingly. Divine Mercy was God’s intention. No parent likes to have to punish their children, but sometimes that is the only way to teach a lesson for the betterment of the child. God punished us for committing the original sin of disobedience and His punishment was death. But, He kept on eye on us like any parent would and looked for a way to offer clemency. In His compassion, he gave us a new birth through the life and death of his Son Jesus Christ. Through His death and resurrection, God gave us His complete forgiveness and total clemency if we only choose to believe. During His life with us on Earth, Jesus taught us and demonstrated His true being to us through His disciples.

Mary, Mother of Mercy, help us always to have this trust in your Son, our Redeemer. Help us too, Saint Faustina, whom we remember today with special affection. Fixing our weak gaze on the Divine Savior's face, we would like to repeat with you: "Jesus, I trust in You!" Now and Forever. Amen.

Do not persist in your doubts, but be strong in your beliefs and faith that your Savior is Risen and is with you always. The readings for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter pit the doubts and disbeliefs of those troubled by daily events against the joys and rejoicing of those who hold true to the belief that Jesus is with us always – even after death on a cross. The first two readings from the New Testament illustrate the joy that the Apostles experience as they praise God and remember Jesus through the sharing of bread. Sometimes, I need to take a break from the stressors of life so that I can surround myself with the joy and love that Jesus offers. In John’s Gospel, Thomas had to experience the physical presence of Jesus

before he could let go of his daily struggles to truly believe that Jesus had risen. Not unlike Thomas, I am human too and I have daily stresses that create obstacles to my strong belief that God is always there. I have to learn to praise God for all that He does for me and my family. As I learn to let go of my daily stressors long enough to be spiritually with Jesus, then I also truly experience the joy and love of God in my life. Sight unseen, I truly believe that Jesus is my Savior and I want to praise Him for the joy He brings to me.

JoAnn Nelson