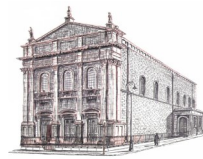




PARISH OF ST. AGATHA 1

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POPE FRANCIS: "HAVING RECEIVED MERCY, LET US BECOME MERCIFUL

On the feast of Divine Mercy Sunday, Pope Francis urges Christians to open themselves to Christ's Divine Mercy, which He grants through Peace, Forgiveness, and His Wounds. In turn, we are asked to share this Mercy with others. "Let us be renewed by the Peace, Forgiveness, and Wounds of the Merciful Jesus. Let us ask for the grace to become *witnesses of mercy*. Only in this way will our faith be alive and our lives unified. Only in this way will we proclaim the Gospel of God, which is the **Gospel of Mercy**. For if love is only about us, faith becomes arid, barren and sentimental. Without others, faith becomes disembodied. Without works of mercy, it dies." The risen Jesus brings about "**the Resurrection of the Disciples**" by raising their spirits and changing their lives. He does this with Mercy. "Having received that Mercy, they become merciful in turn and receive Mercy from Him through three gifts: Peace, the Spirit, and His Wounds.

PEACE

After the death of Jesus, the Pope explained, the disciples were huddled in a room, trapped in futility and full of remorse for having abandoned and denied their Lord. But Jesus arrives and greets them with, "*Peace be with you!*" The Pope said Jesus "does not bring a Peace that removes the problems without, but one that infuses trust within. It is no outward peace, but **peace of heart**." He explained, "The Peace of Jesus made them pass *from remorse to mission*." The Peace of Jesus that awakens mission entails not ease and comfort, but the challenge to break out of ourselves," from the self-absorption that paralyzes, and from the bonds that keep the heart imprisoned. The disciples realised that God did not condemn or demean them, but instead believed in them; as St. John Henry Newman put it, "He loves us better than we love ourselves."

FORGIVENESS THROUGH HOLY SPIRIT

The second way Jesus shows mercy, the Pope said, is by bestowing the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins. By ourselves, we cannot remove sin and its guilt. "Only God takes it away, only He by His Divine Mercy can make us emerge from the depths of our misery." Hence, "we need to let ourselves be forgiven. Forgiveness in the Holy Spirit is the Easter gift that enables our interior resurrection, urging Christians to ask for the grace to "*embrace the Sacrament of Forgiveness*." "**Confession**," he said, "is not about ourselves and our sins, but about God and His Mercy." "*Confession is the Sacrament of Resurrection*, pure Mercy, urging all Priests to convey the sweetness of mercy."

WOUNDS OF JESUS

Lastly, Jesus heals us with Mercy by making our wounds His own and by bearing our weaknesses in His own body. The wounds of Jesus are "open channels between Him and us, shedding Mercy upon our misery." "They are pathways that God has opened up for us to enter into His tender love and actually "**touch who He is**." "**This happens at every Mass**, where Jesus offers us His wounded and risen Body." As the day's Gospel (John 20:19-31) episode of the doubting Thomas points out, "we discover God; we realise how close He is to us and we are moved to exclaim, '**My Lord and my God!**'" The grace of receiving Divine Mercy, he said, is the starting-point of our Christian journey. "Only if we accept the love of God, will we be able to offer something new to the world."

RECEIVING AND GIVING MERCY

And this is what the disciples did, the Pope said pointing to the Acts of the Apostles (4:32-35) "Receiving Mercy, they, in turn, became *merciful*." Let us follow them. No one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common, which is pure Christianity, not Communism. Their fears had been dispelled by touching the Lord's wounds, and now they are unafraid to heal the wounds of those in need. During the course of revelations to St. Faustina, Jesus asked that the Second Sunday of Easter, which already concern the institution of the Sacrament of Penance (Confession) be known as Divine Mercy Sunday. (Vatican News/Robin Gomes)

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Today, we celebrate the Feast of Divine Mercy. It is a very special & unique day in the Salvation Mission of the Catholic Church, because Jesus offers each of us a very rare opportunity (once a year), to have any outstanding temporary punishment in Purgatory (a prison sentence), due to us, in the next life, to be totally removed at this time. God is Divine Mercy, but He is also Divine Justice. His Divine Justice demands that we make retribution for our usual repetitive and unrepentant sins in Purgatory. Retribution is a punishment inflicted on an unrepentant soul for sinful acts never corrected on earth. If a sin is confessed in confession and forgiven by Jesus, but the sin continues to rule our lives, then it was never truly confessed with a contrite heart. Our refusal to suffer discipline on earth carries a penalty, to be served in the disciplined prison of Purgatory or worst still, in Hell.

EVERY SIN CARRIES A PENALTY

Punishment and suffering in the next life is caused by souls not repenting fully for their sins in this life. To believe this, we must first acknowledge that we are sinners. We must believe in the merciful Sacrament of Confession and that Purgatory exists in the next world. Purgatory is an unpleasant prison where the penitent is incarcerated for possibly a long period of years, to unite their sufferings, caused by their unrepentant sins, with the redemptive sufferings of Christ, on the Cross. Hell, on the other hand, is a Prison where there is no chance of getting out. It is sadly an eternal life sentence of suffering for those who rejected God. The souls imprisoned in Purgatory are called Holy, because they are guaranteed to be released someday and enter Heaven, after they have served their time, for offending God on earth. Our prayers and Mass Offerings for them can lead to their release or their sentence being reduced by Jesus. We can avoid Purgatory by uniting our suffering on earth to Jesus' Suffering. At this time, Jesus asks us, through St. Faustina to go to Confession with a contrite heart, attend Mass and venerate the Image of Divine Mercy by praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and a 9 Day Novena.

FROM THE PRIVACY OF YOUR HOME

It is possible, only in these Covid 19 times of tribulations, to fulfil these requirements from the privacy of your home. One can venerate the Image at home and attend Mass on the television, as encouraged by Pope Francis. For the time being, one can make a true confession of one's sins with a sorrowful heart and promising Jesus that one will physically go to confession, when the Government restrictions are lifted. That is a vital condition for the full removal and remission of any suffering punishment due to us in Purgatory. It is like a second baptism where Jesus gives us a completely new beginning. It is a Spiritual Resurrection of the Soul with the cancelling of all sin and punishment. All outstanding debt due to Him, because of our sins, is completely cancelled in these days only. Jesus expects us to change, repent and amend our lives. If you have not done this yet - do so before next Sunday.

CHURCH TEACHING IN EXTRAORDINARY TIMES

The Catechism of the Catholic Church No. 1452, teaches; "*Where the individual faithful find themselves in the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution, it should be remembered that perfect contrition - expressed by a sincere request for forgiveness and accompanied by a promise to God to access confession by the firm resolution to have recourse, as soon as possible, in the sacramental confession, will obtain forgiveness of sins then, even mortal ones.* In the Diary Book of St. Faustina (paragraph 699), Jesus says to her: *My daughter, tell the whole world about My inconceivable Mercy. I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender Mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the Fount of My Mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day all the divine floodgates through which graces flow are opened. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet. My Mercy is so great that no mind, be it of man or of angel, will be able to fathom it throughout all eternity. Everything that exists has come forth from the very depths of My most tender Mercy. Every soul in its relation to Me will contemplate My Love and Mercy throughout eternity. The Feast of Mercy emerged from My very depths of tenderness. It is My desire that it be solemnly celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter. Mankind will not have Peace until it turns to the Fount of My Mercy.* God bless, Fr. Brendan. I am always available for confession. 0879117575.