

## Divine Mercy Sunday

April 11, 2010

Fr. Larry Richards

Good morning. What is today? Divine Mercy Sunday. Today is the day we implore the mercy of God on us and on the whole world. Last night you know when we had the kids here we remembered when John Paul II, he died on the eve of mercy, the Saturday after Easter that year, five years ago. When John Paul died. His whole point, one of the first things he ever started in the church was devotion of mercy from Faustina and that is part of the reason we have John Paul up there with Sr. Faustina and the Divine Mercy. Today everything begins and ends with the mercy of God. You know my oldest devotion from when I was a kid, my grandmother had in her house before the mercy devotion became big, she had a picture from a magazine. She cut it out of the magazine. Then the "Jesus I trust in you" she cut that out of another part of the magazine and she pasted it on. She had it in an old, old frame in her bedroom. I have that same, same picture in a different frame, but the same picture up in my bedroom. It reminds me every morning when I wake up that the very, very, very first thing I see every day is Divine Mercy. I just sit there and look and the very first words out of my mouth everyday when it comes to Him is "mercy." I ask Your mercy. And the God of the Universe that is where He meets me and the God of the Universe that is where He meets you so that we could experience the mercy of God.

Think about today when Thomas was having one of his days. Thomas was Thomas just like we are all who ever we are. You know Thomas was one of the twelve and yet he was obstinate. He said, "You know I don't believe He is risen. I am not going to believe He is risen unless I can see those nail marks so I can take my hand and put it in His side." Can you imagine Thomas had to change his underwear when he was sitting there and Jesus showed up the next week, did he not? Here he is, "I don't believe," and all of the sudden Jesus talks and says, "Peace be with you." Thomas had an accident at that very moment. And then you can sit there and you can see Thomas sitting there or Jesus looking at Thomas, "Come here Thomas!" It's just like one of those things where you want to say, "Slap! Come here! Now okay Thomas take your finger put it right there. Come on, do it. Now take your hand and put it in my side. Come on Thomas. Stop disbelieving and believe." And as he did this Thomas would cry out, "My Lord and My God." But get this He met Thomas where He was and yet He invited him to experience mercy.

When we are going through our times and these last month's I've had times and a half. This week, you know Rudy is still alive but he is still not doing well. It is only just a matter of days now but his is slowly sitting there and it takes a toll on him. I'm doing my taxes. For three days no one was allowed to talk to me as I was doing my taxes. Do you ever get that crazy at the end of the year? Taxes are due and I have to hand them in to somebody. "Oh, someone does your taxes Father." "Yeah, you have to prepare them before you can give them to somebody." When you have all your receipts for a whole year thrown into a big box and you have got to separate them, don't talk to me. It is about that simple. You know and all the different things. I have got to go to Pittsburgh today. I'm missing the Bishop's anniversary on Tuesday. I am speaking to the Bishop and priests of the Diocese of Lafayette. Every moment today I have got something going on. And yet Jesus meets me where I am at. Not where I hope to be. He meets me in the midst of my mess. And Jesus meets you in the midst of your mess whatever that happens to be. And He invites you not to stay there but He invites you to stop looking at yourself in your mess and start coming to Him. And when He tells each of us to take our hand and plunge it into His side that is so that

we could receive, experience and know the mercy of God in our life. Once we get to know that mercy, again mercy is giving something good to someone doesn't deserve it. And yet a lot of us have not yet experienced the mercy of God. We are always thinking that God is this ogre who wants to get us. And He wants to punish us. And He is never happy with us. And He was wishing we were better. And He is disappointed with us. And we stay focused on ourselves and the way we think God is relating to us. That this God who went to the cross, the same God, is the one that looks at you and me and says, "I want to give you My mercy. No you don't deserve it, of course you don't. But that is why I died for you." So each of us is invited today with Thomas to take our hand and plunge it into His side where blood and water flowed out and to experience in our own life the mercy of Jesus Christ.

Once we have come to experience that and really use that. Then He wants each of us to be instruments of His mercy to others. The best way to be an instrument of mercy to others, besides forgiving them , because we need to, right, is that we become people who do the Divine Mercy Chaplet. I say the Divine Mercy Chaplet every day of my life. Everyone here can say it. It takes less than five minutes to say the Divine Mercy Chaplet. It is said on a regular rosary. And I am sure if I was to do a rosary check right now everybody would pull out their rosaries, but we won't because I don't want to embarrass people. Father is not into embarrassing people at all so I wouldn't want to start anything new. I would not sit there and say, "Okay, rosary check" and let me see everybody who has their rosaries. You would never leave your house without your rosary on you I am sure. But anyway if you carry your rosary everyday and then you can start saying the Divine Mercy Chaplet in less than five minutes. All you do, is an Our Father, a Hail Mary, and a Creed which we all know. Then on the big beads it's, Eternal Father I offer you the Body and Blood, soul and divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world. You look at this whole church and you see God the Father holding His Son and you are looking at God the Father and saying because of what Jesus did, because of His sorrowful passion, you are asking Him to have mercy on us and the whole world and that is the very next line. Because of His sorrowful passion have mercy on us and on the whole world. One of the greatest ways to say the Divine Mercy and the way you become an instrument of mercy is every time you say one of the little beads, because of His sorrowful passion have mercy on us and on the whole world, let the first one cover you. Imagine that Jesus and His blood at Calvary is covering you. One drop of His blood as I have said just these last couple of weeks, is more than enough to cover every one of your sins. It is His blood that covers you not yours, His. And so you let Him cover you and you feel His whole blood cover your whole being. And then on the next beads you start praying for your father and you imagine your father, have mercy on us and the whole world, and you imagine the blood of Jesus covering your father. Then you imagine your mother, have mercy on us and on the whole world and you imagine your mother being covered by the blood of Jesus. Then you think about a brother; then you think about a co-worker; then you think about an enemy who hates you. Then you think about someone who's hurt you. Then you think about all the different people in the world and you start imagining that the God of the Universe is right there and you are becoming an instrument of mercy. As I have talked about with peace, to be an instrument of mercy, if you are going to bring mercy to others the only way you are going to bring mercy to others is if it goes through you first, right.

So again, we talked about this last year, you put one hand into the side of Jesus Christ and you offer the other hand to people in the need of mercy and you pray God's mercy on them. When you become that instrument of mercy, you receive mercy. Then even though God meets you where you are at He is not going to leave you where you are at. He is going to take you up into where He wants you to be. But you and I have to humble ourselves, acknowledge our need for mercy and then mercy can never, ever stop

itself for we don't get it. But it has to go through us to be offered for others. As an aside of course, if anyone ever asks you that's not Catholic and they ever say where in the Bible does it say we go to priests for confession? You will be able to pull out today's reading correct? Because Jesus breathed on them and He says, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Those whose sins you forgive, not those sins I forgive," He said, "those sins you forgive they are forgiven them." And listen to the next part of that prayer. He said, "Those whose sins you retain or keep, those sins are kept. Those whose sins you forgive are forgiven. Those whose sins you don't forgive, they are not forgiven." Christ gave great power to the church so that the Church could be an instrument of mercy. So we never ever have to be afraid when we go and expose ourselves to the mercy of God. This God loves to embrace us and give us his very Self.

So today I would encourage you to make sure that if you go to the Divine Mercy today, we are going to have a holy hour at 3 o'clock, we are going to say the Divine Mercy Chaplet, and the promise through the Church by Christ was if we keep this day, if we pray the Divine Mercy, receive communion, go to confession three days before or three days after and then we pray for the intentions of the Holy Father what will we get today? A plenary indulgence. And what is a plenary indulgence? Full remission of all confessed sins. That means that if you come and break one of the windows of my car and then I find out you did it. Then you come crying and say, "Oh Father I am so sorry I broke that window on your car. I was having a bad day." And I am so filled with mercy and I say, "That is okay. You know it is only my nice car that I've had all of this time. I forgive you. I will not call the police. I will not punish you." But what do you think you are going to have to do? Pay for the window of that car. Now let's say you are really mad at me because I yelled at you. You decide before that you break five windows of my car and then I find out. You say, "I am so sorry Father." And I say, "I forgive you. I will not call the police. I will not punish you." But what are you going to have to do? Pay for five windows of my car. So let's say you have a good uncle and this uncle is a rich uncle because he knows you don't have any money and he says, "I will pay for those windows of the car. That is what the church does on this day. Every time we confess a sin God forgives us and He forgives us of the punishment. God is a God of mercy. But then in justice, He says, but now you have got to bring healing to that which you hurt. So this is what you are going to have to do. Well the church steps in and says because of what Christ did on the cross we will pay for your sins.; for what Christ did, but we will pay for the justice. So if you have a chance to get a plenary indulgence I'd get one. Get a plenary indulgence. It can take care of all confessed sins at this very moment. You can keep it for yourself or you can give it to someone who is dying.

Today God wants you to be an instrument of mercy. Today the God of the Universe will give mercy to this newborn child as we baptize her. Everything that is given to her today is given to us if we ask for it. You got it? Get it? Going to do it? May each of you know His love today and forever, amen.