

April 23, 2017 – Divine Mercy Sunday- Cycle A
Fr. Larry Richards

Good morning! How are you? Blessed!

Today we celebrate, of course, the Feast of Divine Mercy and as we celebrate the Feast of Divine Mercy, we celebrate what Christ did for us at the Resurrection and the Crucifixion, and everything He did, was to give us His Mercy. If we listen to the opening line of the second reading, it's pretty great, because it just talks about what we should praise Him for. It just says "Blessed be the God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in His great mercy gave us New Birth to a living hope, through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. So this mercy, then gives us hope and it is interesting isn't it? That for mercy to be real, mercy needs to be something that we give. So I'd like to propose that on this day, on the Feast of Mercy, we don't get focus on receiving mercy, we do that, but don't make this great feast of mercy a selfish day. You know what I mean by that? "I did my novena, I am going to go to Confession, I'm going to get the plenary indulgence, and I can get everything!" It's just about me and what I can get. That makes Mercy something that it's not, a selfish reality. Even in the church.

Think about the Gospel today, the Apostles should have been upset, because Jesus was alive in their presence, right? They should have been oh we're sorry Jesus, we're sorry. We are so sorry we betrayed you. We're so sorry we turned our back on you. We are so sorry we ran from the garden, but they didn't. They just sat there and Jesus came to them, He didn't come to yell at them, did He? What did He do? He just said, "Peace be with you." The only one who had to change his underwear was Thomas, correct? Because he didn't believe it at first, but then Thomas came and Jesus appeared and "okay Jesus, I'm sorry Jesus." Now, he had a different reality, but they all received the mercy of God. They didn't even have to wonder about it? They knew they got it, they didn't have to keep thinking about it without going on about how sorry they were "God, let me give you some more I'm really, really, sorry" and let's talk about this now. Every day for the rest of the time I see you, I just tell you how sorry I am. It wasn't about them.

They knew that when the God of the Universe, when He died, He died to forgive them. That we have to be assured of mercy, right? That's what it is, it's a gift, and it's a gift given to us. He gives it to all of us, so we don't have to keep focusing on ourselves and our sinfulness, we got to ask for mercy and receive mercy, and then let it be done, and then we get over ourselves to become instruments of mercy to others right? As I talked about a lot before. He talks about peace, and he talks about mercy and I say you can never be an instrument of peace, if you never receive peace. You can never receive mercy, if that's all you want to do is receive mercy, because it will die inside of you. The way to receive mercy and peace is to be an instrument of peace an instrument of mercy and we ourselves receive it. Isn't it interesting that Jesus gives the Apostles the give of forgiveness today. He doesn't give it to them for themselves, right?

I can never forgive myself, I can't look in the mirror and say "Larry are you sorry for your sins." "Oh yes, Father, I'm so sorry for all my sins." "Then Larry I absolve you of all your

sins.” That would be the greatest trick in the world, I would love that myself. But the reality is God did not give me the forgiveness of others, for me. I can never, ever, ever, it doesn’t work on me. The gift of mercy isn’t given to me for me. It’s given to me for thee, period. I can’t do any of it for myself, I need to go to someone else to receive the mercy and I got to give the mercy, and I can’t give it to myself.

So what does this mean? So first of all we accept today the mercy that God has given us, and we are grateful for it. We don’t keep begging for it, begging for it, and think how bad I am. That’s not of God, it’s from the evil one, and I promise you. Those of you who like to feel bad about yourself, I’m just telling you it’s not from God. I’m just telling you, receive the mercy! Praise God for the mercy, and then be an instrument of mercy of God to others. It’s not just forgiveness, of course, we have to forgive people, that’s just the reality. But it’s the Spiritual and the Corporal Works of Mercy and that means we feed the hungry, we bury the dead, we take care of the poor, we instruct the ignorant, and all these things we do that, we become these instruments of mercy, that mercy isn’t just about forgiveness, mercy is love in action, it’s giving hope to people, it’s always concern about others.

So today, as we celebrate, and we praise God for His great mercy for us, yes we receive the plenary indulgence and again you’ll be able to receive that today if you’ve done the novena, if you go to Confession, and I’ll hear Confessions after the 3 o clock hour. So somebody will be in there during the 3 o clock hour, we will do our Divine Mercy hour, from 3 to 4 today; and then we’ll be hearing Confessions. So you’ll be getting all that, absolutely, positively, but don’t let it end with you, today. When you receive this great mercy of Jesus Christ, decide today you will always be an instrument of mercy to others, let’s forget about ourselves, and let’s focus on being this instrument of mercy. That God would look at us when we drop dead and say “well done good and faithful servant, you didn’t keep it for yourself, you gave to everyone you met.” Then you’ve become an instrument of salvation and mercy to the world.

You got it? Get it? Gonna do it? May each of you know His love today and forever,
Amen.