

April 8, 2018 – Divine Mercy Sunday - Cycle B
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Good Morning! How are you? Today, of course, is Divine Mercy Sunday. Today we focus on the mercy of God and how we are called to be instruments of that mercy, also. But let's just look at the gospel and see how that mercy is most and best lived. Jesus begins by being with people who are downcast, who are fearful, who are guilty. Every one of the apostles denied Jesus. They left Him alone when He needed them the most. He said, "Can you not watch with me"? Some of them slept. When everybody came to Him, they ran leaving Jesus to die by Himself. So, there is great guilt amongst the apostles. Now Jesus could have appeared to them and made them feel even more guilty and say, "How could you do that to me? See I'm gonna get you now" but the first thing He says to them is "Peace to you." Peace meaning: I don't want you to focus on that anymore. I'm bigger than that. I conquered that. I've come to give you peace.

That's so important because, again, so many people stay away from Jesus because of their own guilt. We talked about it on Easter. They stay focused and they think God's out to get them and that God's gonna condemn them and God, every time they come into His presence that He's out to make them feel worse about themselves. These people either stay focused on themselves and become scrupulous or they stay focused on themselves and they stay away from God. Both of them can be terribly wrong because both of them is focused on themselves. Jesus says, "I want you to focus on me and I say to you Peace be with you." That peace is this wholeness that Jesus comes the resurrection after he proves that life is stronger than death. He proves to us that he wants to give us that wholeness – oneness with God; oneness with nature; oneness with self; oneness with others – that's what peace means. It is the prefill state. This is the gift of Jesus.

First of all, we have to hear Him say that to us. Peace be with you, be whole. But then right after he says that, He keeps us focused on what put Him on the cross – the wounds that we caused Him. He says, "Look" and He showed them His hands and He showed them His side. We need to dwell there for a moment because it's there when we realize how much we hurt Him; how much we don't deserve peace; how much we know that we need mercy. See, some people never get there and they think that compared to everybody else, I'm a pretty good person. I don't have much to deal with or much to feel guilty about. Well then, God bless you. I have plenty.

I need to know that it's me that caused those sins to Christ that caused those wounds to Christ but not only to Christ. Everyone here has hurt somebody else. Have you not? There was a guy here yesterday and I said, "Someone here who has never hurt another human being raise your hand." First row – shut up. Everybody here has hurt somebody. If you haven't hurt anybody and you don't think you have, you don't have good self-knowledge. Ask your spouse if you have ever hurt them. They would say "no". Yeah – right! Anyone we have ever loved, we've hurt. That's the power we get for loving people. When you love someone, they have the power to hurt you and they do – not on purpose but every one of us has hurt another human being.

That's important for us that we need to dwell on the wounds of somebody else. Meaning – instead of us just feeling guilty about what we've done and that keeps us focused on ourselves – “Yeah, I'm no good. I'm a bad person. Look what I did to other people.” It has nothing to do with the other person. We need to dwell in the pain we've caused Jesus and caused others. We need to sit there for a moment. Jesus shows it to Thomas and Jesus shows it to Thomas before Thomas even believed. Here – look! This is what you've done to me and to others but I in my mercy want to let that go. What happens is that we realize how much I need mercy. Then we can fully receive that mercy and then give that mercy to others. It's when we think we don't need mercy that we can be very stingy with mercy with other people.

So, if we dwell in the wounds of Christ and the other people we've hurt in our lives, then we know that, boy – do I need mercy. Do I need forgiveness? So, after we're dwelling there, then Jesus looks, we need to then receive this mercy that He wants to give us. The whole focus of Divine Mercy is mercy giving something good to someone who doesn't deserve that and as I've said constantly, that's all of us. When we're there and we receive this mercy, isn't it interesting as soon as He shows them His hands and feet; as soon as He shows them His side; as soon as He gives them peace, then He says, “Here” and He breathed on them and gave them the Holy Spirit. Then He begins by saying, “Those whose sins you've forgiven, if you forgive, they are forgiven.”

The very first thing Jesus wants of the people who have just experienced His mercy was to be that mercy to other people. That's what we need to do on the Divine Mercy Sunday. We need to ask God, first of all, for the grace that every day of my life I become an instrument of mercy; not just in forgiving people and of course that means that we must forgive everybody. Of course we've talked about that. Again, you can easily forgive others when you realize how much you've been forgiven. You can easily do that. As soon as I say you must forgive everybody, you say, “I don't know if I can do that”. You haven't spent enough time in the wounds of Christ. You haven't experienced how much you need mercy. Go back there. Spend time there. You feel it? Now experience the mercy; now give the mercy. Those who are not willing to give mercy have not known how much they need mercy. So, you need to go back there and sit there until you know how much you and I need mercy.

Then, after you've received it, then we gotta truly give it to others. Mercy is forgiveness but it's also the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. We need to take care of the poor. We need to reach out to the least of our brothers and sisters. We need to be these people of mercy. So, if today you and I ask Jesus today and every day for the rest of my life, I would be an icon, a living presence of mercy. I would bring mercy to all the people in my life and to everybody I meet. The Divine Mercy Sunday isn't something we celebrate once a year so I can get a plenary indulgence. It's something you and I live every day of our life. That's what Christ wants from us: to live this each day.

So today, let's hear Him say to us, “Peace. Be whole”. Let's dwell in the wounds we've caused Him and others. Let's receive His mercy and then let's beg God that all of us would be great instruments of that mercy.

You got it? You get it? You gonna live it? May each of you know His love today and forever. Amen.