

April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Divine Mercy Sunday

Fr. Larry Richards

Good morning! How are you? (Blessed!) We had a great celebration last night for Deacon, now Deacon Joe Petrone's ordination. He preached the Mass. He is going to be a great priest. His homily was three minutes and forty-seven seconds. It was a great reality. He also gave a little "umph" for people who did not believe that they would come to know the love of God. That is a great thing when you can do it short, but you can do it to make people think. You are not going to get one of those homilies today, just so you know.

The reality is, this day, on Divine Mercy Sunday when I woke up this morning, I was on my five days away. Which you think it would be the greatest thing ever but it was like, "I don't think I like not doing nothing for five days. In fact, I know I don't like doing nothing for five days. I put ten pounds on in five days. Can you imagine? Ten pounds! It was ridiculous. Any way that will change this week. And I exercised every day but it was just the reality of me being passive. I am not good at being passive.

And I can relate well with Thomas. Thomas did not like being passive and just believing because everybody else believed. Uh, uh – I don't believe it unless I can go and put my hands there, I don't believe this stuff. I am so glad that God let Thomas be in the Gospels because it gives me great hope that we can still be Thomas. Thomas still became a bishop. Thomas still became a saint. Thomas still became all of those things and yet he didn't like being passive either and just believing because every body else said it. He wanted to know for himself.

And so this morning when I go up, the alarm went off. You know I have one of these alarms that wake you up when you are supposed to be most able to be awake. It is in a half hour distance. So I woke up at 3:50 this morning. And I sat there and I said, I have an Alexa and it turns my lights on. "Alexa, good morning." And so the lights came on, and there I am looking at the side my Divine Mercy image. And just as I always do, "Jesus, I trust in You as I begin this day." And as I sat there and said that, it just like hit me like I have been doing this wrong for a long time. It never hit me the same way. That normally that when I think of Divine Mercy I go at it passively, have mercy on me, Oh God. Have mercy on me, oh God. Oh God I am a sinner, have mercy on me. And then when I do it that way, who is the focus on? Me! Can you imagine that I would be focused on myself?

We had a great, I think I told you, my old spiritual director came and spoke to the priests and someone asked him, you know he is a counselor and a spiritual director for forty years, what do you think the number one problem is of everyone he has seen through out the years? The guy said narcissism. And then I go, "Yeah, I think I am a narcissist." All focus is about me. About me. About me. Whatever it happens to be. That selfishness, that narcissism that comes in. Everything affects me. But that is now what Divine Mercy Sunday is about. We make it that. It is about me getting the grace. Getting everything I want for Divine Mercy so I can get all the plenary indulgences. Me, me, me, me. That is not Divine Mercy.

Divine Mercy, when Jesus appeared to us, He said, "Strike the image. Have a painting painted. And underneath that image put, Jesus, I trust in You." Or Thee. So Divine Mercy is about trusting Jesus and His mercy not just focusing on our self. So the reality is God is filled with mercy. Is there any doubt in any

of our lives that God will give us mercy if we ask for it? No, there is no doubt. And you cannot sit there and say about someone else, "Well God won't give them the mercy because..." AH! You cannot do that. God is mercy and you can never judge who gets the mercy and who doesn't. YOU cannot, don't even try. God is mercy as I will talk about this afternoon when we have our three-hour holy hour of Divine Mercy. God is rich in mercy. That is who God is.

But this mercy that God wants to give us demands a response from us. So, again in the Gospel today when Thomas is sitting there and you know he is finally there and then Jesus appears and then Thomas again, I think he had to change his underwear, cause oh dear, He is here. He is alive. Oh my! And Jesus demands from him a response. "Come here, Thomas. Go ahead, put your hand there. Go ahead, put your hand there." He said, "Stop disbelieving. But believe. Believe. Trust. Do something instead of feeling sorry for yourself. Get over yourself Thomas and your doubts. Stop disbelieving, but believe. Trust." And then he makes that great statement which I have said every day since I have been ordained and I am sure most of you say every day at consecration, what does he cry out? "My Lord and my God." He makes a statement of faith that gives him eternal life if we go to the end of the Gospel. "All this has been told you that you may believe, that you may have eternal life.

What God demands of all of us on this Divine Mercy is belief in His goodness, is trust in His mercy. That it depends on Him not on me. That it is You. "Lord, I trust in You." I cannot trust in me. I mess up a lot. I am selfish. I am arrogant. I am proud. It can't be focused on me. Jesus, I trust in Thee. Jesus, You are my Lord and my God. And when we have this trust in Him, when we get to focus for five seconds off ourselves and what we are going to get from Him, when we focus on Him, and say, "I trust in You. I believe You will have mercy on me. I believe that You are good." It is about Him, then that belief gives us the gift of eternal life. That is the way we receive it.

So today, let's let this Divine Mercy Sunday be all about Him. Let's today not just sit there and focus on, "Lord, I need mercy. I want to be a passive person. Just gimme, gimme, gimme." But let it demand a response of trust and faith. "Lord, Jesus, I trust in Thee. You are my Lord and My God. You got it? You get it? Going to live it? May each of you know His love today and forever, amen.