

APRIL 23, 2017
Second Sunday of Easter or Sunday of Divine Mercy
Homily

The Word of God: Acts 2: 42-47; Ps 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24; 1Pt 1:3-9; Jn 20:29; Jn 20:19-31

On April 30, 2000 Saint John Paul II, on the occasion of the canonization of Saint Faustina, instituted the feast of Divine Mercy on the Second Sunday of Easter. *"It is important that we accept the whole message that comes to us from the word of God on this Second Sunday of Easter, the Holy Pope said, which from now on throughout the Church, will be called Divine Mercy Sunday."* *"Throughout the world, The Pope stated, the Second Sunday of Easter will receive the name "Divine Mercy Sunday." This merciful feast is a perennial invitation to the Christian world to face, with confidence in divine benevolence, the difficulties and trials that mankind will experience in the years to come."*

According to the Diary of Saint Faustina the institution of this "Divine Mercy Sunday was a desire of Christ Jesus. And indeed, in today's Gospel Jesus reveals this his wish --that all people's may experience God's mercy-- to his disciples: *"Receive the Holy Spirit, Jesus says as He breathed on them, whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."* With these words, our Lord Jesus Christ

entrusted to those men the authority to forgive people's sins; Jesus grants his ministers the grace to administrate his Divine Mercy. This Jesus' wish becomes true in the confessional through the sacrament of Reconciliation or confession or penance; whatever you want to call it: the sacrament of Divine Mercy.

God the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son --Christ Jesus-- has reconciled the world to himself. This is the mystery that we just celebrated last Holy Week. God the Father, Saint Peter says, in his great mercy has given us a living hope through Jesus our Lord; a living hope to an imperishable inheritance --life eternal-- in heaven. Blessed are those who believe in this mystery, Jesus says, because through this belief they will live eternally.

Let us see if we can comprehend God's infinite mercy. After a long history throughout which people constantly broke our friendship with God; the sacrifice of Christ brought us all forgiveness and peace. After the disciples abandoned Jesus when He was taken prisoner, and witnessed the Lord's sufferings and crucifixion, Jesus comes to that room and says to them all, "Peace be with you." These words --*peace be with you-*

- used to be just a greeting; but this time, in Jesus' mouth they mean that we have nothing to fear, because we have debt with no one; not with each other, not even with God. This peace Jesus gives to his disciples on that glorious evening is given to us also through the sacrament of forgiveness. When you confess your sins to Jesus' minister, you hear from him these words of Jesus: "Go in peace your sins are forgiven."

The wish of Jesus --that the world may be reconciled and forgiven-- was revealed to Saint Faustina: "I desire, Jesus said to the Saint, 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."

Let no soul fear to draw near to me, Jesus said, 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... 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.

"Give thanks to the Lord, my brothers and sisters, for He is good, his love is everlasting. His mercy endures forever."