

## Homily - Divine Mercy Sunday

The readings for this Sunday are about God's Divine Mercy given to us through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, our need for trusting Faith, and our need for the forgiveness of our sins. The opening prayer addresses the Father as "God of everlasting Mercy." In first section of the Responsorial Psalm, we repeat three times, "*His mercy endures forever!*" God revealed His mercy, first and foremost, by sending His only begotten Son to become our Savior and Lord by His suffering, death and Resurrection. Divine Mercy is given to us also in each celebration of the Sacraments, which were instituted to sanctify us.

The first reading tells us how the early Church grew every day because of the acts of mercy -- sharing, sacrificial *agápe* love -- practiced by the early Christians.

In the second reading, St. Peter glorifies God, the Father of Jesus Christ, for showing us His mercy by granting His Son, Jesus' Resurrection from the dead and a glorious Ascension into Heaven, thus giving us the assurance of our own resurrection.

Today's Gospel vividly reminds us of how Jesus instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a sacrament of Divine Mercy. The risen Lord gave his Apostles the power to forgive sins with the words, "*Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain, they are retained*". Presenting the doubting Thomas' famous profession of Faith, "*My Lord and my God,*" the Gospel illustrates how Jesus showed his mercy to the doubting apostle and emphasizes the importance of Faith for everyone.

Messages: 1) We need to accept God's invitation to celebrate and practice mercy in our Christian lives: One way the Church celebrates God's mercy throughout the year is through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Finding time for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is another good way to receive and give thanks for Divine Mercy. But it is mainly through the corporal and spiritual works of mercy that we practice mercy in our daily lives and become eligible for God's merciful judgment.

2) Let us ask God for the Faith that culminates in self-surrender to God and that leads us to serve those we encounter with love. Living Faith enables us to see the risen Lord in everyone and gives us the willingness to render to each one our loving service. The spiritual Fathers prescribe the following traditional means to grow in the living and dynamic Faith of St. Thomas the Apostle: a) First, we must come to know Jesus personally and intimately by our daily and meditative reading of the Bible. b) Next, we must strengthen our Faith through our personal and communal prayer. c) Third, we must share in the Divine Life of Jesus by frequenting the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist. St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa) presents it this way: "If we pray, we will believe; if we believe, we will love; if we love, we will serve. Only then we put our love of God into action."