

## **HOMILY – DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY – 8 APRIL 2018**

Pope Francis, in the Year of Mercy 2015, encouraged us to 'rediscover' the infinitive Mercy of the Father, who welcomes everyone and goes out personally to encounter each of them. "Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy, by his words, his actions and his entire person reveals the mercy of God".

Preaching on Good Friday, Pope Francis used the words of inspiration of Jesus, "My dear people, these pains I suffered for all of you in love, weep with Me and weep for Me but do not be downhearted, for the best is still to come, a time of great rejoicing, trust in Me.

Perhaps at this stage, it would help if I revisited with you, the source of Divine Mercy Sunday, when Our Blessed Lord appeared to St Foustina, in her convent cell, on 22 February 1932, in Poland. (Originated from a vision St Foustina had on 22 February 1931). 'In the evening, when I was in my cell, I saw the Lord Jesus, clothed in the gesture of a blessing, the other was touching the garment of the breast. From beneath the garment, slightly drawn aside at the breast, there were emanating two large rays, one red, the other pale. In silence, I kept my gaze fixed on the Lord, my soul was struck with awe but also with great joy.

After a while, Jesus said to me, "Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature, Jesus I trust in You. I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel and then throughout the world".

"I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over its enemies already on earth, especially at the hour of death. I, Myself, will defend it as My own glory."

"I desire that there will be a Feast of Mercy. I want this image, which you will paint with a brush, to be solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter, that Sunday is to be the Feast of Mercy".

"The two rays denote Blood and Water. The pale ray stands for the Water which makes souls righteous. The red ray stands for the Blood which is the life of souls. These two rays issued forth from the very depths of My Tender Mercy, when my agonized Heart was opened, by the lance of the Cross. The rays shield souls from the wrath of My Father. Happy is the one who will dwell in their shelter, for the just hand of God shall not lay hold of him".

"I am offering people a vessel with which they are to keep coming for graces to the fountain of mercy. That vessel is this image with the signature "Jesus I Trust in You".

St Foustina was asked by Jesus to have the image painted on canvas and spread throughout the world. Remember the apparition took place at the time of the rise of Hitler in Germany and the threshold of the Jewish Holocaust. If ever the world needed Mercy, it was surely at that time. However, every age, every generation, needs the Mercy of God. Pope John Paul II, now St John Paul, lived and suffered under the oppression of the Nazis and the Communists. He, when Pope, promoted and then defined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday, in the world, at 3pm, in every country, he encouraged the Chaplet to be said and Mass celebrated. 'Implore my Mercy – for sinners', he declared.

Here is Pope John Paul's Homily extract in 2001 in Rome. "Let us thank the Lord for His love, which is stronger than death and sin. It is revealed and put into practice as mercy in our daily lives and prompts every person in turn to have "mercy" towards the Crucified One. Is not loving God and loving one's neighbour and even one's enemies, after Jesus's example, the programme of life of every baptized person in the whole Church?"

Let us echo the words of St John Paul II, in our own lives and recognise the importance of being merciful and we pray, Our Heavenly Father is merciful to us on the day of judgement.