

Second Sunday of Easter....Divine Mercy Sunday

Today, we celebrate Pope Saint John Paul's great love – God's Mercy.

With today's devotion we come not just to the closing of the Easter Octave, but more amazingly we are opened up to the great truth of God's Divine Mercy, offered through His Son Jesus Christ.

God's Divine Mercy is a comfort both for the living and the dying, for as St Faustina was told by Jesus Christ, 'Encourage souls to say the Chaplet which I have given you...Whoever will recite it will receive great mercy at the hour of death...When they say this chaplet in the presence of the dying, I will stand between My Father and the dying person, not as the just judge but as the Merciful Saviour.'

Saint Peter today reminds us of just this promise when he writes, 'by raising Jesus Christ from the dead (God has given us) a sure hope and the promise of an inheritance that can never be spoilt or soiled and never fade away... this is a cause of great joy for you, (he tells us) even though you may for a short time have to bear being plagued by all sorts of trials...' (how true that is at this present moment in life and history). Saint Peter continues, '...you are already filled with a joy so glorious that it cannot be described, **because you believe**: (it is belief that fills us with Joy) and you are sure of the end to which your faith looks forward, that is, the salvation of your souls.'

St Peter is totally convicted in the belief that God in Jesus Christ is the fullness of all our Hopes, Joys, our Salvation and Eternal happiness, and as we see in the Gospel today, the fullness of Peace itself, for Christ Himself offers His disciples the gift of Peace three times, which we are told fills them with joy, both at the sight of Jesus and at the offering of such a gift – a gift the world cannot give as Jesus told them during their journey together before His death and resurrection (John 14:27).

This scene with the Risen Lord offering His disciples the gift of Peace and showing Himself to them is missed by Thomas, and as we have seen all too often throughout this week's Gospel passages, he is another Apostle and disciple who is a person of dis-belief; he is another who needs to see Jesus for himself before he will believe, and of course when he does see Jesus he offers the great Easter proclamation of belief when he pronounces, 'My Lord and my God.'

We too are called to be caught up in this great Easter proclamation of recognising Jesus Christ as our Lord and God – a Lord and God that can do no other than to Love us and offer us His Divine Mercy. God's Divine Mercy goes beyond justice or one's rights or need or wants, it goes to the heart of who God is and therefore who we are – people who can go beyond themselves in selfless sacrifice for others (sacrifice being the gift of opening others to the gift of holiness in the power of Christ who is the source of Holiness won for us on the Cross of Sacrifice). It is then that as we see in the Acts of the Apostles that we are able to live as a community as one in common prayer, faith, belief and as is necessary in many areas now, to be faithful to the faithful by sharing what we have with those who have not.

Today during this corona virus pandemic there is great need to offer Divine Mercy spiritually to those who are dying and to offer comfort to those who are unable to be with those who are dying – it is then that we in our own way can bring a spiritual unity and connectedness with those who are separated at this time of needing to be together. God's Presence and Mercy go across time and space – nothing can stop God being Present to those we send Him to – especially in and through our prayer - it is them that we are being alive in the Communion of Saints, a community that we are truly part of both here on earth and united to in Heaven – a continuous stream of Life, Hope, Joy and Peace – a Peace the world cannot give – let us send this most precious and real gift out to those who need it the most now and every day by offering a bit of time in prayer every day in this Easter season leading up to Pentecost, and then let us see what the Holy Spirit will bring into our and their lives now and forever. I'm sure it will be the gifts of Peace and Joy – for we do believe in Jesus as My Lord and My God.