

# Divine Mercy – The ABC’s of God’s Mercy

## **Introduction**

In today's Gospel we see the risen Jesus coming to meet us where we are. He appears even though the doors are locked. And he says “Peace be with you!” He offers us the same invitation offered to Thomas... The opportunity to touch him. To feel the wounds of his hands and to put our fingers in his side. We own these wounds of Jesus... They are the effects of our sin... Our rejection of Christ.

## **The Tough side of God’s Mercy (The Reality of Sin)**

Let us take a moment and turn our eyes back to the little group of Apostles who, eight days after Easter Sunday, were gathered once again in the upper room. And Jesus appears to them, once again, in the glory of his resurrected body, effortlessly passing through their locked doors and their hidden fears. The first thing he does is go after the one lost sheep whose heart is troubled: he lets Thomas touch his glorious wounds, mercifully removing all doubts that had separated Thomas from the rest of the tiny church. And then he looks into the eyes of his Apostles, breathes on them, and gives them the power and task to forgive sins in his name.

Almost 20 centuries after that encounter between Christ and his Apostles, Pope John Paul II established the first Sunday after Easter as a universal Feast of the Church in honor of that Divine Mercy. In so doing, he was fulfilling a request our Lord himself made in his appearances to the Polish nun, St Faustina Kowalska. Just the thought of Christ's mercy fills us with confidence and hope. But it should also fill us with humility.

If Christ is so eager to spread the news about his boundless mercy, it's because we need that mercy. It's because sin is a reality in our lives and in our world. And sin causes real damage that only Christ can repair. This is the tough side of God's mercy - the reality of sin.

## **Christ’s words to St. Faustina on Sin and Mercy**

When Jesus spoke to St Faustina, he never shied away from this uncomfortable topic. He once told her:

*Souls perish in spite of My bitter Passion. I am giving them the last hope of salvation; that is, the Feast of My Mercy. If they will not adore My mercy, they will perish for all eternity...tell souls about this great mercy of Mine, because the awful day, the day of My justice, is near. (Diary, 965)*

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In another conversation, he explained the power of his mercy by explaining the ugliness of sin:

*Were a soul like a decaying corpse, so that from a human standpoint, there would be no hope of restoration and everything would already be lost, it is not so with God. The miracle of Divine Mercy restores that soul in full. (Diary, 1448)*

Sin, is our rejection of God's friendship. It separates us from God, the source of all life, like a decaying corpse. That is why a decaying corpse is the perfect image to describe a soul in the grips of sin. But the most disturbing thing about sin is that, unless a sinner seeks God's forgiveness, which is always available and unconditional, it can lead to eternal separation from God, to hell.

In today's world people tend to doubt the existence of hell. They reason that a merciful God would never allow a soul to go to hell. Mercy in the view of the world today means that God must love whatever I choose to do. This is a lie. We have a God who is most merciful, but he is also a God who is perfect, and the standard for the judgment of our life is anchored in his perfection.

Hell is real and hell is a choice!

St Faustina was given a vision of hell, in which she saw the torturous sufferings of the condemned. She wrote afterwards that God had given her this vision

*"so that no soul may find an excuse by saying there is no hell, or that nobody has ever been there, and so no one can say what it is like." She also wrote, "I would have died at the very sight of these tortures if the omnipotence of God had not supported me" (Diary, 741).*

Christ's mercy is a big deal, because sin is a big deal. But Christ's mercy is the bigger than our sin.

### **The ABC's of Divine Mercy**

We all need to be reminded of these difficult truths, because life in this world can get distracting. And the reminder he is giving us today will bear fruit in our lives if we follow the ABC's of the Divine Mercy.

#### **A. Ask for Mercy.**

The best way to ask for his mercy for ourselves is through the sacrament of

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confession, entrusted to the Church on this very day 2000 years ago. Here is what Jesus told St Faustina about confession:

*When you approach the confessional, know this, that I Myself am waiting there for you. I am only hidden by the priest, but I Myself act in your soul. Here the misery of the soul meets the God of mercy. (Diary, 1602)*

But we can also ask for mercy for others, especially by praying for those who don't trust or believe in Christ's mercy.

### **B. Be Merciful.**

Jesus told St Faustina, "I demand from you deeds of mercy... You are to show deeds of mercy to your neighbors always and everywhere." This means doing good things for others not because they deserve it or for our own reward, but simply in order to follow in the footsteps of our merciful Lord. But where can we find the strength to do that?

### **C. Completely Trust in Jesus.**

Jesus himself will give us his grace, if we let him. He will make us into ambassadors of his mercy, just as he did with the first Apostles. Whenever we are afraid to Ask for mercy, when we feel too weak to Be merciful, we should simply pray the prayer that Jesus told St Faustina to write underneath the image of his Divine Mercy: "Jesus, I trust in you."

During this Holy Hour with Jesus, let us ask to receive the fountain of God's mercy, and let us confess our trust on the providence of His Son. Nothing would please him more.

### **Being Images of Christ's Mercy**

In the revelations of his Divine Mercy, Jesus asked St Faustina to commission a painting. The painting would show Jesus standing, dressed in a white alb, with his right hand raised in blessing and his left hand opening his heart. Out of his heart there were to be streaming two beams of light - one white and the other red. He explained what those rays symbolized:

*The two rays denote Blood and Water. The pale ray stands for the Water which*

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*makes souls righteous [baptism]. The red ray stands for the Blood which is the life of souls [the Eucharist]. These two rays issued forth from the depths of My tender mercy when My agonized Heart was opened by a lance on the Cross ... Happy is the one who will dwell in their shelter, for the just hand of God shall not lay hold of him (Diary, 299).*

Today Jesus is reminding us of the power and abundance of his mercy. We should be full of joy and confidence at this reminder. But what about all of our brothers and sisters who aren't with us? What about all our neighbors, colleagues, and classmates who have never experienced Christ's mercy or never heard about it? Jesus died for them too. And he is sending us to be messengers of his mercy to them. By our selfless acts of service to others, seeking no reward except the joy of following Christ, we become extensions of the red ray of Christ's very own life, given up for us on the cross. And by our kind, and truthful words, we shine forth the white light of Christ's mercy

Today, as we sit in the presence of Christ in view of Him, we are called to remember that he is the very fountain of mercy, let's ask him for the grace to be living images of his mercy in this world so wounded by sin.