

THE GREAT MERCY OF GOD...

Today, the Second Sunday after Easter has become known as “Divine Mercy Sunday.” The Divine Mercy Devotion traces its roots back to a Polish nun by the name of Sister Faustina Kowalska who died in 1938. Sister Faustina was privileged to receive a vision of Our Lord Jesus who pointed to his chest. There then appeared two rays, one red, the other white. The red represented the blood of Christ and the white the water flowing from the Lord’s side as he hung upon the cross. Sister Faustina was instructed to have this image published with the inscription: “Jesus, I trust in you.” The portrait of Divine Mercy is one that is perhaps familiar to us; I would like to get a picture of it here at St. Charles. What does Divine Mercy mean? Well, the idea of mercy brings to mind compassion, grace and forbearance. The picture of Jesus painted for us in the Gospels is one of merciful love for sinners. The Scripture says, “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world but to save it.” The Lord desires all of us to be happy with him in heaven someday and so he is incredibly merciful to all of us miserable sinners. Some people have a conception of God as an angry, vengeful and waiting to “Pounce” upon them for any infraction of the moral law. Of course, that is not the case. The story is told of St. John Vianney, The Holy Cure’ (Parish Priest) of Ars, France. One time a woman came to St. John Vianney distraught because her husband had committed suicide by jumping off a bridge. The lady cried out, “My husband is lost, he is damned eternally!” “Not so,” replied the saint. Between the parapet of the bridge and river, he managed to say an Act of Contrition and so is saved!” Whenever I think of the Divine Mercy, I always think about the good thief on the cross. He was a murderer and a robber. Yet, the Lord pardoned and saved him: “Today, you will be with me in paradise!” So there is hope for all of us. Speaking at a general audience, Pope Francis gave a beautiful description of the Mercy of God. The Pope said, “Brothers and sisters, God’s face is the face of a merciful Father who is always patient. Have you thought about God’s patience, the patience he has with each one of us? That is his mercy.” Something for us to reflect upon. It is true to say that we are so often impatient with ourselves, others and the Lord himself! On this Sunday, Divine Mercy Sunday during this special Year of Mercy, why not pray the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy? All you need is a rosary to do it! In this prayer we repeat over and over again, “For the sake of his sorrowful passion, have mercy upon us and on the whole world.” Yes, the whole world is really in need of God’s mercy because there is so much evil in the world today. Just think about the recent attack in Brussels by ISIS in which 31 innocent people were killed and hundreds wounded. Yet, the mercy of the Lord is greater than all this wickedness as horrible as it is. As we celebrate this Divine Mercy Sunday may we always give thanks to the Lord “For his mercy endures forever!”

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Jerome