

April 1, 2018

Divine Mercy

On the Sunday after Easter, April 30, 2000, Pope John Paul II canonized Faustina Kowalska, a Polish nun who died in 1938, and promulgated the Feast of Divine Mercy for the observance of the Universal Church. On April 27, 2014, the Feast of Divine Mercy, Pope John Paul II was himself canonized along with Pope John XXIII.

Our Lord communicated a number of amazing promises to St. Faustina regarding those who would embrace this devotion, but chief among them, He told her that extraordinary Graces will be poured out on all those who honor His Mercy. This is particularly true on the Feast Day itself to all those who (1) reverence His Image; (2) pray the Chaplet in a communal celebration; and (3) go to Confession. Faustina reports that the Grace Our Lord describes is something that can best be described (though not in a technical, theological sense) as a 'second Baptism.'

This so called 'second Baptism' is attained in the usual way of other Indulgences, but following Our Lord's lead, John Paul II uniquely adapted this one. Usually, one must say certain prayers/devotional practices and go to Mass and receive Holy Communion on the day itself and go to Confession within 8 days before or after the day/celebration. For the Feast of Divine Mercy, one need do the first two stipulations, but to maximize the opportunity for Mercy, get to Sacramental Confession within 3 *weeks(!)* before or after with the intention of it applying to this Feast.

The whole point of this is not to store up 'credits' against the time we will need for our love to be purified in Purgatory, but to have an *encounter* with Redeeming Love, *now*. This is the experience of being forgiven and healed when there is no remedy—far beyond what could be expected or hoped for. It is pure gift and fills us with such gratitude that there are no fitting words or expressions to say thank you. We are reduced to silence in the warm glow of a gentle smile and an embrace by pierced hands to a lanced-open breast from which flows life.

Here at St. Francis Xavier, because of our many Communities and Masses, we are not able to have a tradition of recognizing this Feast with a celebration during the Hour of Mercy (3pm on Divine Mercy Sunday). I recommend that everyone go someplace where they are. It does not matter where you go, but I know Corpus Christi Parish in East Sandwich has one every year. You will likely find me there helping with Confessions.

Christ is Risen!

Fr. Michael