

APRIL 11, 2021  
DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY  
John 20: 19-31

“JESUS, I TRUST IN YOU!”

“A Time magazine issue in 1984 presented a startling cover. It pictured a prison cell where two men sat on metal folding chairs. The young man wore a blue turtleneck sweater, blue jeans, and white running shoes. The older man was dressed in a white robe and had a white skullcap on his head. They sat facing one another, up-close and personal. They spoke quietly so as to keep others from hearing the conversation. The young man was Mehmet Ali Agca, the pope’s would-be assassin (he shot and wounded the Pope on May 13, 1981); the other man was Pope St. John Paul II, the intended victim. The Pope held the hand that had held the gun whose bullet had torn into the Pope’s body. This was a living icon of mercy. John Paul’s forgiveness was deeply Christian. His deed with Ali Agca spoke a thousand words. He embraced his enemy and pardoned him. At the end of their 20-minute meeting, Ali Agca raised the Pope’s hand to his forehead as a sign of respect. John Paul shook Ali Agca’s hand tenderly. When the Pope left the cell he said, “What we talked about must remain a secret between us. I spoke to him as a brother whom I have pardoned and who has my complete trust.” This is an example of God’s Divine Mercy, the same Divine Mercy whose message St. Faustina witnessed.”<sup>1</sup>

My brothers and sisters, today the Second Sunday of Easter is Divine Mercy Sunday. It centers on God’s bountiful mercy for all of us sinners. All our readings centered on God’s mercy and forgiveness. Our first reading, from the Acts of the Apostle, pictures us the glimpse of the first Christians’ corporal works of mercy. They shared among them what they had especially for those brothers and sisters in need. They believed that everything they owned must be held in common because they were of one heart and

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<sup>1</sup> [www.stories4homilies.co](http://www.stories4homilies.co)

soul. “There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.”<sup>2</sup> The apostles learned and witnessed the practice of sharing of love, compassion and mercy from Jesus Christ Himself, and the first Christian community wanted to continue, imitate and live that for the rest of their lives. While the second reading from the First Letter of John speaks about practicing and observing corporal and spiritual works of mercy by being faithful and obedient to God’s commandments through loving others as God loves us. The reading teaches us to treat others with love, mercy and compassion as God is loving, merciful and compassionate. In our gospel, Jesus Christ instituted the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation. He said: “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”<sup>3</sup> The Sacrament of Penance is a sacrament of Divine Mercy. Whatever sins we have will be forgiven because His mercy is abundant. As we approach Him in this sacrament, only love and forgiveness will be given to us, no questions, no if or but, only compassion and mercy. Even to the doubting Thomas, Jesus showed mercy by saying “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.”<sup>4</sup> He did not scolded Thomas for his unbelief but showed him the importance of faith and the Mercy of God for those who have faith in Him.

Pope St John Paul II, considered Great Mercy Pope, established Divine Mercy Sunday on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2000. He said in his homily, “by this act today, I pass on the message of Divine Mercy to the new millennium. I pass it on because I want people to know the better face of God, and that of his Divine Mercy, and through it, the better face

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<sup>2</sup> Acts 4: 34-35 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

<sup>3</sup> John 20: 21-23 NRSV Catholic Bible Press

<sup>4</sup> John 20: 27 NRSV Catholic Bible Press

of their brethren. The light of the message of Divine Mercy which the Lord wished to renew in the world, will be as much a beacon of hope for the third millennium.”<sup>5</sup> During the canonization of Sr. Faustina Kowalska, Saint John Paul II said, “Believing in the love of God means believing in His mercy. Saint Faustina invites us by the witness of her life to keep our Faith and Hope fixed on God the Father, rich in mercy, Who saved us by the precious Blood of His Son. During her short life, the Lord Jesus assigned to St. Faustina three basic tasks: 1. to pray for souls, entrusting them to God’s incomprehensible Mercy; 2. to tell the world about God’s generous Mercy; 3. to start a new movement in the Church focusing on God’s Mercy.”<sup>6</sup>

So, my dear sisters and brothers, let us take God’s invitation to always practice mercy through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and show mercy to our brothers and sisters always and everywhere. Let us spread and radiate God’s mercy to others by our words, actions, and prayers. Let us do corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to shelter the homeless, to visit the sick, to visit the imprisoned, to bury the dead; and the spiritual works of mercy: to instruct the ignorant, to counsel the doubtful, to admonish sinners, to bear wrongs patiently, to forgive offences willingly, to comfort the afflicted, to pray for the living and the dead.

My brothers and sisters, as we celebrate today, the Divine Mercy Sunday, let us always practice corporal and spiritual works of mercy in our daily lives, and with trusting abandonment and firm hope and humility, let us pray: Jesus the Risen Lord, I trust in you. Amen.

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<sup>5</sup> [divinemeracy.org](http://divinemeracy.org)

<sup>6</sup> [frtonyshomilies.com](http://frtonyshomilies.com)