

April 15, 2007
Divine Mercy Sunday

Good morning. Today is Divine Mercy Sunday as we talked about. And if we listen to the gospel, something important happens here. We see Jesus who comes upon the apostles and they were all afraid – like so many people are. They live in a life of fear, fear of tomorrow, fear of what’s going to happen, fear of sickness, fear of death – just living in fear. This particular time, the apostles lived in fear of the Jews. And then Jesus appeared in the midst of their fear, and He said “Peace be with you.” And it wasn’t enough – the words of peace – what got the apostles to start rejoicing was that He showed them His hands and His side. So, in the midst of our own struggles and our own fears Jesus comes before us on this Divine Mercy Sunday and He says “Peace be with you” and then He shows us His hands and His side, and He says “look, this is what it cost me to love you. This is what it cost me. I was wounded and I died, just to give you mercy, just to give you love.” And that is why, again, if you every read St. Faustina’s diary – again and again, the one word out of Christ’s mouth – again and again – is “my people do not believe in my mercy – my people do not receive my mercy. They despair of mercy.” You know, last night – it is always good when you are a pastor and you have keys to everything and when everyone else is asleep you can come into the church in the darkness. And so last night I came down here and I just sat in front of the Divine Mercy picture. And it’s the original one, or at least close to the one that Sr. Faustina saw. And as I sat there and I could just focus so much on the rays – again, when He sees Sr. Faustina, He points to His side, the same way He pointed to His side when He was with the apostles. And coming forth are these rays of blood and water – this ray of baptism and this ray of mercy and to just immerse yourself in it – that is all I did last night, of course because I know – some people don’t think I know – how much I am in need of mercy. There isn’t a day where I am not in need of mercy. When I do Missions I always say to the people “now, you just know me for these last eight hours – what do you think gets me in trouble more than anything else?” And they all – at the same time – it is amazing – point to their tongue! Why would that be? They only meet me for eight hours and they can already tell that reality! And so, with all of us – each of us are in need of mercy for one thing or another. And this is what Jesus wants to give you and I this day. He wants you and I to come before Him and to receive the mercy. No, you are not worthy – that is what mercy is. You can’t sit there and say “not, I am not worthy - He won’t want to give me the mercy...” You know, that self-pity doesn’t do squat! It doesn’t do squat! It doesn’t help you in your spiritual life – it doesn’t help you in your family life. It doesn’t help you because all it does is it is something that the devil uses to pull you down and make you not an instrument. Not an effective instrument, because you focus and I focus on ourselves. That self-pity is not what God wants from us. He wants us to come before Him and acknowledge how much we need the mercy – and not just to acknowledge that, but then to receive that! To be bathed in these rays of light and red! To be bathed in there, to sit in the mercy. And when we do this – like the apostles, we will rejoice. We will rejoice, because when we are in the presence of God – it is our sins that killed Him – our sins. But that is fine for Him. “Look at how much I love you. Look at how much!” And what He wants us to do is to be bathed in His mercy. To receive the mercy, to stop making

excuses of why we are not worthy enough. To just receive it. And the reason He wants us to receive this is the same reason He wanted the apostles. Isn't it amazing – here they are afraid – they are looking at Him and thinking “oh, we betrayed you – you're going to be mad now...” and He says “Peace be with you...” shows them His hands and shows them His side, and then what does He say? He says it again! “This is what I want! I want you to have peace!” That is God's will for you. That is God's will for me – that we have peace. Now, we are not talking about peace in the world, where there is not war – lets stand-up against the war. That has nothing to do with the peace that Christ is talking about. The peace that Christ wants is peace in your heart. What is peace by definition – oneness with self – oneness with others – oneness with God – oneness with the world. Peace – it clicks. That is what God wants of you and me, and He not only wants it – He gives it as a gift. And the way we receive this gift is when we dwell in His mercy. But then the reason He wants us to have this gift – if we look again in the gospel – and what does He do after He says “peace” again – He now sits there and says “as the Father has sent me, so I send you.” That after we come into the very presence of God and He wants to give us peace, and we immerse ourselves in His mercy, we immerse ourselves in His blood, we feel this inside of our very being – then we rejoice. Then what do we have to do? We have to be the instruments of His mercy. See, so often people want to receive this mercy, but they don't want to give it, huh? “Because, yeah I hurt Christ, but this person really hurt me...” We can't truly be instruments of mercy unless first, we receive it, then we have to give it to everybody. Now, get this – when you and I give mercy, we are going to be doing the same thing Jesus did – “Peace be with you...” and then we are going to show them our hands and we are going to show them our side, because just as mercy cost Jesus Christ His life, when you and I give mercy, it will cost us our life. We will have the wounds that will show we have been mercy-givers. We will have these wounds to show people. That means we forgive people when we give them mercy whether they deserve it or not. That means we give people mercy even when they have not asked for mercy. Now again, some people play this game and say “well, I'll give it to them if they ask...” Well, what if they don't ask? You still have to give it. “Well, where does it say that, Father?” Oh, it says it on the Cross. Jesus, while the people are crucifying Him, spitting on Him, torturing Him, not one of them – not one – asked for mercy. Not one said “I'm sorry” as far as we know. Not one said “oh, forgive me, Jesus.” All of them wanted to kill Him. All of them wanted Him to suffer. All of them wanted Him dead. And He looked at all of them, and He forgave them. That's mercy. How about us? Are we truly these instruments of mercy? Do we have the wounds that we can show people? These wounds come from me giving mercy to people. That is what we need to be doing – showing others what the wounds are about. They are not wounds because I stood up for what's right. They are wounds of mercy. I stood up and forgave those who hurt me. That is what it is to be an instrument of mercy – an icon of mercy. And it will kill us and it will hurt us, yes, but we have to gladly embrace that because when we do – then we have this peace. Again, as I've talked about it before, when you and I refuse to forgive we don't have peace in our heart, and we never will. So, you can walk out of here and completely dismiss what I say, because Father is a jerk, and say “he just doesn't understand what it is like to be hurt.” Trust me – be a pastor for a week. I understand, but the reality is we all have to get beyond it – not hold the grudges and say “mercy is what God wants me to give you...” and to become icons of mercy. When you and I can finally

get there – by God’s grace, not by ours – then peace starts settling in on us. And just as He gave great life to Christ – so will God the Father give great light to you and me. If we go through the struggle of giving mercy, having the wounds of mercy, wanting peace. You know, think about that – here is someone who hurt you badly – they stole from you, they hurt you, they have hurt your family, and you look at them and you want to give them peace. “What do I want from you? Not justice – I want you to have the peace of God in your heart.” Whoa – that is what it is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Yup! It will cost you your life, just like it cost Him His. But once it does, He will give us great life, and we will finally have peace. May each of you know His love today and forever. Amen.