

Divine Mercy Sunday

The essential celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday consists in the celebration of the liturgy of the Second Sunday of Easter, during which the homily should focus on the scriptural readings of the day. It should be noted that the three cycles of scriptural readings and liturgical prayers are all centered on the forgiveness of sins and God's infinite mercy, which endures forever.

In addition, it is necessary that the day publicly be called by its proper name, "Divine Mercy Sunday." The Decree of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments of May 5, 2000, which added this title to the Second Sunday of Easter, did not intend to leave this as an optional title. The Latin of the original decree literally states that "in the Roman Missal, after the title 'Second Sunday of Easter,' there shall henceforth be added the appellation '*that is, Divine Mercy Sunday.*' " Unfortunately, the English version in official use translates the phrase ambiguously: "*or Divine Mercy Sunday.*" But the Latin is clear: "seu," in other words, "namely," or "that is." Moreover, this was the Holy Father's intention in granting this title to the Octave Day of Easter; it is clear from his own public announcement during the homily for St. Faustina's canonization, when he stated: "It is important then that we accept the whole message that comes to us from the word of God on this Second Sunday of Easter, *which from now on throughout the Church will be called 'Divine Mercy Sunday.'*" In his Regina Caeli address on Divine Mercy Sunday, 2001, the Holy Father thanked God that he was able "to proclaim the Second Sunday of Easter as the feast of Divine Mercy *for the entire Church.*"

In the February 2003 USCCB, BCL Newsletter...

Plenary Indulgence for Divine Mercy Sunday

In a decree dated August 3, 2002, the Apostolic Penitentiary announced that in order "to ensure that the faithful would observe this day (Divine Mercy Sunday) with intense devotion, the Supreme Pontiff himself established that this Sunday be enriched by a plenary indulgence...so that the faithful might receive in great abundance the gift of the consolation of the Holy Spirit. In this way, they can foster a growing love for God and for their neighbor, and after they have obtained God's pardon, they in turn might show a prompt pardon to their brothers and sisters."

*The plenary indulgence is granted under the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer for the intentions of Supreme Pontiff) to the faithful who, on the Second Sunday of Easter or Divine Mercy Sunday, in any church or chapel, in a spirit that is completely detached from the affection for a sin, even a venial sin, take part in the prayers and devotions held in honor of Divine Mercy, or who, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed or reserved in the tabernacle, recite the *Our Father* and the *Creed*, adding a devout prayer to the merciful Lord Jesus (e.g. *Merciful Jesus, I trust in you!*).*

Additional provisions are offered for those who are impeded from fulfilling these requirements, but wish to acquire the plenary indulgence. The full text of the decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary may be found at: <http://www.divinemercysunday.com>

The Second Sunday of Easter in the new *Missale Romanum* bears the name, "DOMINICA II PASCHÆ seu de divina Misericordia." While the readings and prayers for Mass on this day remain unchanged, the decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary gives guidance to preachers as they reflect on the mystery of Divine Mercy:

The Gospel of the Second Sunday of Easter narrates the wonderful things Christ the Lord accomplished on the day of the Resurrection during his first public appearance: "On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad to see the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you,' and then he breathed on them, and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained'" (Jn 20,19-23).

In addition, the decree requires that parish priests "should inform the faithful in the most suitable way of the Church's salutary provision. They should promptly and generously be willing to hear their confessions. On Divine Mercy Sunday, after celebrating Mass or Vespers, or during devotions in honor of Divine Mercy, with the dignity that is in accord with the rite, they should lead the recitation of the prayers that have been given above. Finally, since 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy' (Mt 5,7), when they instruct their people, priests should gently encourage the faithful to practice works of charity or mercy as often as they can, following the example of, and in obeying the commandment of Jesus Christ, as is listed for the second general concession of indulgence in the *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum*."

The Sunday after Easter is Divine Mercy Sunday!

How should we prepare for this great Feast of Mercy?



Jesus told St. Faustina that this Feast of Mercy would be a very special day when **“all the divine floodgates through which graces flow are opened”**. (Diary 699) Our Lord made a great promise to all those souls who would go to Confession and then receive Him in Holy Communion on the Feast of His Mercy, now called Divine Mercy Sunday throughout the Catholic Church.

Jesus promised that **“The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain the complete forgiveness of sins and punishment.”**(Diary 699) He went on to say **“I want to grant a complete pardon to the souls that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion on the Feast of My Mercy.”** (Diary 1109)

We want to encourage everyone to take advantage of this incredible promise and the additional Plenary Indulgence on this great Feast of Mercy “Divine Mercy Sunday”. We want you to benefit fully from these promises, and we also want you to notify all of your family and friends about them too and urge them to return to the practice of their faith!

The Image of The Divine Mercy, which Our Lord requested to be solemnly blessed and venerated on this day, will be on display in our church. Pope

John Paul II said that the image portrays the Risen Jesus Christ bringing Mercy to the whole world. Our Lord said **“I want the image to be solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter, and I want it to be venerated publicly so that every soul may know about it. I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish”**. (Diary 341, 48) Please take the time to visit with this Image of The Divine Mercy and venerate Jesus.

Jesus said to St. Faustina **“I am offering people a vessel with which they are to keep coming for graces to the fountain of mercy. That vessel is this image with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You”**. (Diary 327) **“The two rays denote Blood and Water. The pale ray stands for the Water which makes souls righteous. The red ray stands for the Blood which is the life of souls. These two rays issued forth from the very 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)

About the feastday “Divine Mercy Sunday”, Jesus said **“...tell the whole world about My inconceivable mercy. I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon the souls who approach the Fount of My Mercy. On that day all the divine floodgates through which graces flow are opened. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet.... Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the Fount of My Mercy”**. (Diary 699)

Our Lord said **“When you go to confession, to this fountain of My mercy, the Blood and Water which came forth from My Heart always flows down upon your soul...”** and **“Every time you go to confession, immerse yourself entirely in My mercy with great trust, so that I may pour the bounty of My grace upon your soul. 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”** (1602) **Make your confession before Me. The person of the priest is... only a screen. Never analyze what sort of a priest that I am making use of; open your soul in confession to Me, and I will fill it with My light.”** (1725)

It is required of all Catholics to confess their sins at least once every year. If you haven't had the opportunity to meet this obligation then take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to receive an outpouring of an ocean of graces that Jesus promises. Those who have already confessed sins for Easter could make room for others.

It is allowed for one to go to Confession up to about 20 days, before or after Divine Mercy Sunday.

The World's Best Evangelization Tool: *Divine Mercy Sunday*

With so many (so-called) Catholics away from the practice of their faith, there is a great need for evangelization. Not only are we all called to actively evangelize all peoples, we are called to bring home our lost and alienated brethren. Our Lord has given us a great gift called Divine Mercy Sunday that if used properly, can restore our Church to overflowing.

Jesus gave us many parables that would set the standard for us to follow. He told us how the Good Shepherd rejoiced at finding His lost sheep. How so many more lost sheep need to be found today. Not only does He rejoice today when the sheep are found, but He is very much saddened when even just one is lost.

In His revelations to Saint Faustina, which He gave for the world, Jesus remarked that “The loss of each soul plunges Me into mortal sadness” and that “The flames of mercy are burning Me, clamoring to be spent”(from the diary, entry #1397, 50). If we love Jesus, then we must do everything that we can, to find His lost sheep.

Our Lord has given us a very simple way to bring our lost sheep back home. It is called the “Feast of Mercy” or “Divine Mercy Sunday”. This great feast, which the Church has been celebrating universally since Pope John Paul II canonized St. Faustina, in the year 2000, has everything in it that we need to restore our Church.

Jesus requested that a Feast of Mercy be established in the Church on the Sunday after Easter and He has made a great promise to any soul that would turn to Him by going to Confession and then receiving Holy Communion on that feast-day.

He said “Whoever approaches the fountain of life on this day will be granted the complete forgiveness of sins and punishment” (Diary, 300). Jesus is attempting to get souls to receive Holy Communion in a perfect state of grace, without sin.

It is quite clear that Jesus wants this particular Sunday to be set apart. Our Lord said “I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and a shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion will obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day are opened all the divine floodgates through which graces flow. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet”. (Diary, 699)

That's not all. Jesus said "I want to pour out My divine life into human souls and to sanctify them, if only they were willing to accept My grace. The greatest sinners would achieve great sanctity, if only they would trust in My mercy". (Diary, 1784)

Trust is a key word for Divine Mercy. Our Lord in His great wisdom knew that in these times, the words "Jesus, I trust in You" would have a profound meaning for those who might need some motivation to come to Him and to ask for His mercy.

Our Lord's placement of the feast on the Sunday after Easter gives pastors the perfect opportunity to address the greatest crowds that attend on Easter Sunday. He knows that many people are looking for a good reason to start coming back to church. What better reason than to be able to start over again with a great promise for the total forgiveness of sins and punishment? Who wouldn't benefit from that?

Topping that off is the fact that Jesus said that "The greatest sinners would achieve great sanctity". What could be more beneficial? Souls achieving great sanctity for just going to Confession and then receiving Holy Communion on Mercy Sunday? What could be easier? People just need to be seriously urged to go to Confession!

One of the requirements of Catholics is the confession of their sins at least once a year. Studies have shown that most people are in great need of fulfilling this most important precept of the Church. Our Lord said "I desire that priests proclaim this great mercy of Mine towards souls of sinners". (Diary, 50) What greater reason could there ever be, than Jesus' promise, to urge everyone into Reconciliation?

The Vatican has also added a Plenary Indulgence to this feast, which is to remain perpetually in place. The beauty of this indulgence is the increased amount of time that it gives to priests to hear confessions. It is allowed for one to go to Confession up to about 20 days, before or after, Divine Mercy Sunday.

It's so simple. Just remind everyone on Easter, that the following Sunday is a very special feast called Divine Mercy Sunday where they can receive the total forgiveness of their sins and punishment. Sinners will be filled with grace, as Jesus promised, and then they will radiate that love and mercy to others that will cause a ripple effect throughout the Church! What a great gift Jesus has given us!

Sincerely for all souls,

Robert R. Allard, Director
Apostles of Divine Mercy
www.divinemicysunday.com