

Divine Mercy Sunday was instituted in the Catholic Church on the Second Sunday of Easter on April 30, 2000 and decreed on May 5th of that year. Since then, there have been many questions as to the requirements of a proper celebration of this feast of mercy.

First and foremost, we must realize that this feast is a refuge for sinners and not a “party for devotees”. Up until the establishment of this feast in the universal Catholic Church, parishes in many parts of the world would have separate Masses as to not “interfere” with the flow of regular Sunday Masses.

Today, there is a great need for educating our priests and bishops in how to correctly plan for a very fruitful and beneficial celebration of this feast of mercy. This feast should, in fact, be celebrated at each and every Mass.

The Vatican has laid out all the details in the decree for the special plenary indulgence that was issued specifically just for Divine Mercy Sunday. A lot of emphasis was placed on the last paragraph entitled “Duties of Priests” and it includes the following requirements which can be found at www.MercySunday.com :

A: Informing Parishioners in the most suitable method of the plenary indulgence.

B: Hearing Confessions: priests should be prompt and generous in hearing confessions.

C: Leading Prayers for the indulgences after celebrating Mass and other liturgies.

D: Encourage the Faithful to do Works of Mercy as often as they possibly can.

Noted in this special plenary indulgence decree: This decree has perpetual force, any provision to the contrary notwithstanding.

Let’s look at what these duties involve:

A: Informing all the faithful about the plenary indulgence in the most suitable manner. This duty, no doubt, points to the proclamation of it, particularly on Easter, when our churches are full to overflowing with **souls who have not confessed yet**. What could be a more appropriate time? They are the ones who can most benefit.

Suggestion: Use the Bulletin Insert and the Confession Guide in all Easter Bulletins. It can be found at: www.MercySunday.com .

Consider these words for the Easter Homily:

** “If you haven’t had a chance to make your yearly confession, don’t miss out on this great opportunity, because next Sunday is our new feast called Divine Mercy Sunday, and what our Church is offering next Sunday, is called a plenary indulgence, and what this means, in very simple terms, is that, if we will go to Confession, and then receive Jesus in Holy Communion on next Sunday, we can obtain the complete forgiveness of all sins and all of the due punishment”.*

We also can’t forget all the other Catholics that do not even attend Sunday Mass at all. These souls also need to hear the Good News of the special Plenary Indulgence. We could place articles in all the local newspapers, use every form of media including radio and TV spots telling everyone about the opportunity to obtain the complete forgiveness of all sins and punishment. Don’t let anyone get away without hearing about the great gift that the Church offers on Divine Mercy Sunday.

B: Hearing Confessions in a prompt and generous manner. Many people will want to take advantage of the total forgiveness of sins and punishment and will be asking our priests to hear their confessions. Be ready for an onslaught of people who have been away from Confession for decades. Many priests will be uplifted with this experience and will want to hear many more of these confessions.

Suggestion: Schedule extra time and extra priests for confessions and advertise them verbally, in the bulletin, and in the media. Encourage those who have already gone to Confession to make room for others to go. The Church is now allowing up to twenty days, before or after, to go to Confession to obtain this very special plenary indulgence.

C: Leading the Prayers after all Masses and the other liturgical ceremonies on that day. The Church wants everybody to be able to receive the grace of the plenary indulgence and has instructed priests to lead the prayers.

Suggestion: On Divine Mercy Sunday after all the Masses, lead the recitation of prayers for the indulgence which are: the Our Father, Apostles Creed, and a prayer for the Pope, (perhaps a Hail Mary). Add an invocation such as “Merciful Jesus, I trust in You”.

D: Encourage the Faithful to practice works of Mercy and Charity as often as they can, following the example of, and obeying the commandments of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Suggestion: Encourage the faithful to go out and to seek that which was lost and to bring them to this Feast of Mercy. What better act of mercy could there be than to help their fellow man to gain eternal life?

Follow these 8 simple steps:

- 1. Prepare a Homily for Easter Sunday** using the suggested words (A*) in this leaflet.
- 2. Copy and Print the Bulletin Insert and the Confession Guide** from the web at the www.MercySunday.com website. Put them into all of the Easter bulletins.
- 3. Remind those that have already gone to Confession (within 20 days) to Make Room** for others that haven't confessed yet.
- 4. Schedule Extra Time for Confessions** with all available priests, on the Saturday before Divine Mercy Sunday, if possible.
- 5. Place Articles in all local Newspapers** telling everyone about the forgiveness of all sins and punishment that is now available. Include the times for Confession. Involve other parishes if they are in the same area.
- 6. Obtain an Image of Divine Mercy** if the parish does not have one, to help with the liturgy on Divine Mercy Sunday, and as a permanent installation in the church.
- 7. Prepare a Homily for Mercy Sunday** to focus on the forgiveness of sins and tell everyone again about the special plenary indulgence. Remind everyone of the need for a sacramental Confession of all grave sin before receiving Holy Communion. Include the Act of Contrition, at some point before receiving, for those who have forgotten it.
- 8. On Divine Mercy Sunday after all the Masses, Lead the Prayers** for the plenary indulgence, which include: the Our Father, Apostles Creed, and a prayer for the Pope.

First of all, we must recognize the need to get all Catholics back to the practice of their faith. We have a grand opportunity and a duty, on Easter Sunday, to catechize all of the Easter-only Catholics, and invite them, back into participation in the sacramental life of the Church. We must not, and can not, let these souls continue to receive Communion in the state of mortal sin, it is a sacrilege.

Canon Law #768, 769, 777.1, and 773 clearly state the responsibilities of our priests. It is imperative that we use this great opportunity to instruct these souls with a basic catechesis on why they should confess their serious sins before receiving the Eucharistic Lord.

We should also reach out to those inactive Catholics in our local areas who no longer attend Mass at all. We can do this through every method possible, including TV, radio, and the newspapers. We also need to reach out and share the good news of the Gospel to all those who live within our territory, who are non-believers, as we are called to do, as evangelists, as it is stated in Canon #771.2.

If we will but humbly turn to the Church and follow her direction, no doubt, we will help to save many sinners. Our Lord Jesus reminded us of the need to leave the 99, to get the 1 that was lost, and how much all of Heaven rejoices, when just one of those sinners repents and returns (Luke 15: 4-7).

Apostles of Divine Mercy

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How to Celebrate Mercy Sunday



A Step-by-Step Guide to the correct celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday

Includes the “Duties of Priests” that are in the special (perpetual) Plenary Indulgence issued by the Holy See that are the guiding light for all bishops and priests who want to properly celebrate this great Feast of Divine Mercy.

Geared towards our **bishops and priests**, this guide will show us how to correctly celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday in such a way that will yield tremendous fruit and the return of many Catholics back to the practice of their faith.

Every parish and diocese can experience growth and the joy of seeing the lost sheep being brought back into the fold (Church).