

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter – Cycle A**  
**Homily on Divine Mercy Sunday by Father Hugo L. Blotsky, O.S.B.**  
**April 19, 2020**

- I. Here in Wyoming, we are seeing the beginnings of a change in season from winter to spring. We welcome the sights and sounds of new life that are all around us.**
  - A. Birds have been migrating back from the South and flying over Fremont County. Song birds wake up with the rising sun and sing their melodies to announce the beginning of a new day.**
  - B. New born calves can be seen romping playfully through the pastures on sunny days for more than a month. A mare gave birth to a colt on Holy Saturday on Ron & Laura Mamot’s farm, Lilly.**
  - C. Fresh, green sprouts of grass have broken through the soil. New buds are forming on tress.**
  
- II. There are also signs of new life around us at the beginning of the Easter Season. There are new beginnings in the circle of life.**
  - A. For us people of faith in the Risen Lord, we feel called by the Lord to go through a spiritual circle of life, similar to what we see happening in nature’s circle of life: fall, winter, spring, summer.**
    - 1. We need to die to ourselves so that we can become new creatures of God.**
  - B. Our whole season of Lent was about preparing ourselves to die with Christ on Good Friday so that we could rise with Christ on Easter Sunday.**
    - 1. We were to die to the sin in our lives, to die to bad habits, to give up our attachments to even the small sins, to let go of negative attitudes, and to overcome any inappropriate behaviors within us.**
    - 2. On Easter Sunday, we were to rise with the Risen Christ so that we can be filled with renewed hope, have a renewed attitude towards life, and discover a new freedom for our lives.**
  - C. In the Gospel today, we read that new life for the disciples began when the Risen Lord Jesus appeared to them and said, “Peace be with you.”**
  - D. The disciples followed Jesus because they had seen Him work miracles such as multiplying loaves of bread and fish to feed thousands of people.**

1. They had seen Him restore sight to the blind, and restore hearing to the deaf. He healed the crippled so that they could walk again. He raised His friend, Lazarus, back to life again. He forgave the sins of even the greatest of sinners.
- E. The disciples never guessed or imagined that by following this Miracle-worker, they would someday have to deal with the cruel death of their Master who had preached love, forgiveness, mercy, compassion, and the promise of everlasting life.
1. After He was arrested, the disciples hoped for and expected Jesus to perform a miracle in which He could escape his captors, and eventually escape death. A greater miracle was awaiting them.
- F. The disciples had locked themselves into a room because they feared the Jews. Their Master and Teacher, Jesus, had just been crucified. The disciples feared that they too could be put to death by the civil authorities of their day.
- G. Jesus came into the room with locked doors to console and to comfort His disciples. The disciples were witnessing a greater miracle. Jesus didn't escape death, but rather He conquered death. He rose from the dead.
- H. Jesus said to His disciples, "Shalom." Shalom is a Hebrew word and it means, "God is with you." Knowing that God's mercy and compassion is with you in the midst of your fears and anxieties can bring much peace and comfort into your life.
- I. The disciples felt shame because even some of His closest followers were weak and disloyal: Peter denied Jesus three times, Judas betrayed Him and then committed suicide, and now Thomas was doubting that Jesus had really risen from the dead.
- J. The Shalom that the Risen Jesus was offering to His disciples was to let them know that God was with them. They didn't need to live with shame for having failed Him and for having been weak. He forgave them. He introduced them to His Divine Mercy.
1. Fear and shame can be two very powerful forces that can easily control a person's life, if you allow them to control you.
- K. The Risen Lord had come to heal the disciples of their fear of the Jews, to heal them of their fear of death, and to heal them of their fear of failure as disciples. He came to heal them of their fear of being abandoned by God, to heal them of their fear of rejection, and

to heal them of their fear of being left alone without a leader to guide them.

L. The Risen Lord had come to heal the apostles of their shame for not being the best role models to the other disciples, to heal them of their shame for not being a true friend during the trial, persecution and crucifixion.

M. The healing from fear and shame came to the apostles not only at hearing the Risen Lord say to them, “Shalom,” but also when He said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”

1. The new life that the apostles received was that they now needed to forgive themselves, and that they were not to focus their attention upon their own weaknesses and wrong-doing. They were being sent to forgive others of their wrong-doing and sins.
2. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, they were being sent to carry on the work that God the Father had sent Jesus to do.

III. This new life in the Risen Christ is meant for you and for me also. We are to receive His Divine Mercy throughout the Church’s Liturgical calendar year, and especially as we celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday. Pope John Paul II had designated that Second Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday.

A. A devotion to the Divine Mercy of Jesus began at the request of Jesus Himself through visions and messages to a Polish Nun, Sister Faustina. She kept a diary in which she wrote messages she was receiving from the Lord.

B. The Message of Divine Mercy calls people to a deeper understanding that God’s love is unlimited and available to everyone—especially the greatest sinners. Sister Faustina, an uneducated Polish nun, wrote a diary of about 600 pages recording the revelations she received about God’s mercy. Even before her death in 1938, the devotion of The Divine Mercy had begun to spread.

C. The message is simple: Ask for His Mercy. God wants us to approach Him in prayer constantly, repenting of our sins and asking Him to pour His mercy out upon us and upon the whole world. Be merciful. God wants us to receive His mercy and let it flow through us to others. He wants us to extend love and forgiveness to others just as He does to us. Completely trust in Jesus. God wants us to know that the graces of His mercy are dependent upon our trust. The more we trust in Jesus, the more we will receive.

- D. Sister Faustina said that the Lord instructed her to have an image of Him painted in which rays of light are beaming from His heart. These rays represent the Lord's mercy flowing from His heart to all those who place their trust in Him.
  - E. Below the image are these words that we are asked to say frequently, "Jesus, I trust in you."
  - F. The Lord gave a promise to Sister Faustina, who is now a canonized saint, "I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over (its) enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I, Myself, will defend it as My own glory."
    - 1. The enemies that Jesus referred to are the devil and his minions who attack us spiritually with a bad thought, image, or past memory which can stir up our passions. These passions are "love, hatred, desire, fear; joy, sadness and anger." When these passions get stirred up, an individual might react and create an emotional response that could cause a person to become physical.
    - 2. For example, we know that anger in itself is not sinful. If we misuse or abuse anger, the actions that come from anger are then sinful.
  - G. Out of this devotion to the Divine Mercy Image has flowed quickly a movement to many parts of the world. Another promise of the Lord to St. Faustina was, "By means of this Image I shall be granting many graces to souls; so, let every soul have access to it."
  - H. This devotion to the Divine Mercy Image is very timely. Pope John Paul II strongly encouraged this devotion. He designated the Second Sunday after Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday throughout the Catholic world.
- IV. As we repent of our sins and place our trust in the Divine Mercy of the Risen Lord Jesus, we will find that new life will come into our lives. All the major problems in the world today, the problems in our country, the problems in the church, and the problems in our personal lives will become as small compared to the Divine Mercy of the Lord.
- A. None of us is able to out-sin the Mercy of the Lord. The Lord is offering us hope for our future as we turn our lives over to His Divine Mercy.