

## Homily Rerun: April 23, 2017 - Fr. Seno



### Theme: Celebration of God's Mercy on the whole world

My dear people of Peace, we celebrate in the Octave of Easter Divine Mercy Sunday. The mercy of God is to be proclaimed, acknowledged, embraced, celebrated and shared with joy and gratitude. What else is Easter about if not our restoration in Christ through God's mercy? See how St. Peter acknowledged, embraced, celebrated and declared this mercy of God in our Second Reading (1 Pt 1:3-9): "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Easter is the victory celebration of the mercy of God. It is our living hope. It puts an end to our fears, timidity, guilt, and the sense of hopelessness. It restores our dignity as sons and daughters of God. Our Gospel passage (Jn 20:19-31) shows the initial wretched condition of the apostles: "the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews". They lived in fear, anxiety, blame, guilt feelings, and unforgiveness. For example you are I still refuses to forgive ourselves of the abortion, adultery, not taking care of our old parents before they died. Jesus came, forgave, strengthened and reassured them: He "stood in their midst and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'" He did not even indict them for their past failings.

Beloved, we always remain precious in God's sight. Yes! However crumbled, broken and dirty we may be, our fundamental value in the eyes of God remains. He wants us no matter what condition we are. This is especially true because in baptism we receive an indelible character in our soul. We belong to God. God never gives up on us; He remains generous with His mercy, unless we reject it. Thus, whatever the situation of our lives, we must never despair. Rather, we should readily turn to God for mercy. This is what the Divine Mercy devotion is about.

Dear friends, I want to quickly point out that having recourse to Divine Mercy is not exclusive to our age. The people of God, even from the Old Testament period, always turned to God for mercy. However, the New Testament period is unique; it is the fulfillment of mercy in the context of the Crucifixion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus. The "Image in the Divine Mercy Picture", inspired through Saint Faustina, is the Crucified and Resurrected Lord. The rays represent blood and water from his pierced side, the fountain of rebirth and the cleansing from sin and guilt. The message is simple: "*Today, bring to Me all mankind, especially all sinners, and immerse them in the ocean of My mercy.*" God's mercy is portrayed as abundant as the ocean. But we know it is trillions and trillions of times greater. It is infinite. Notice how Jesus exemplifies His Father's infinite mercy and compassion. To the apostles who denied him and fled during His trial, He not only forgave, but also grants them the power to forgive sins: "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." What! Was that a reward for their sins and failings? Was that justice? What a lesson for us today! St. Paul declares clearly, "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (2Cor 5:18). Yes! Always go to confession; be not deceived. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is from God, not from Satan. How privileged Catholics are as the only possessor of this legacy! Beloved, we are called to be ambassadors and ministers of mercy. Many of us are easily entangled with false notions of justice today. Some people think they have a right to be angry; to remain angry and unforgiving over past hurts. The most common words on their lips are, "Justice must be served! Justice should be served!" But what justice are they speaking about? Is it not Vengeance?

My dear friends, have you been hurt by anyone? Turn it over to Jesus in the ocean of His mercy and you will find peace. Take a closer look at the Crucifix: Has anyone been more terribly hurt than Jesus in all history? Yet, he was able to say, "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34). He invites you NOW to do the same: "Judge not, and you will not be judged... forgive, and you will be forgiven... For the measure you give will be the measure you get back" (Luke 6:37-38).

Finally, please, reject the evil spirit of sadness and dejection today. Let go of past hurts! Be on talking terms with all! Enough of the rift wrecking families for so long! Why do you refuse to forgive your ex husband or wife? Why do you refuse to forgive you your son or daughter? Why do you refuse to forgive your Dad or Mum? Let not the Devil keep you in bondage! Accept the peace the Risen Lord offers you today and be made whole! The Risen Christ comes to proclaim liberty to captives. Do not be an obstacle to His Mission. He declares to all, "Take heed to yourselves; if your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him; and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, and says, 'I repent,' you must forgive him" (Luke 17:3-4). Pick up your phone and make that call to your parents or children today do not wait for tomorrow. Certainly, nobody is saying it is easy. Nevertheless, rather than reject God's command, pray for God's help like the apostles did, Lord "Increase our faith!" (Luke 17:5). May God's mercy suffice for us through Christ our Lord. Amen.