

Second Sunday of Easter. Cycle C
Divine Mercy Sunday
April 10-11, 2010

“Peace, Forgiveness, Belief”

The formal name for this Sunday is the “Second Sunday of Easter.” Two older, popular names for this Sunday are, first, “Low Sunday,” so called to help highlight the “high” feast of Easter, which is the preeminent feast in the Church calendar. The second is “Quasi Modo Sunday,” so called because those words are taken from today’s Introit. The two words mean, “as to the manner.” The Introit reads, “Crave as to the manner of new born babes, pure spiritual milk.” The more popular name for this Sunday, so instituted by Pope John Paul, is Divine Mercy Sunday. The popular title of this day complements the formal title in terms of the readings, especially the gospel.

Three actions are communicated through the gospel, **1)** the action of peace; **2)** the action of power to forgive sin; and **3)** the action of coming to belief in Jesus. We use the word action because the God revealed by Jesus is not static in concern for us, but active. God is communicating His great generosity in all three actions.

1) We will never have true and lasting peace unless it

is initiated and instituted by a power beyond human power. During this Paschal Tide, during this Easter Season, the invitation to join in celebrating the Lord's suffering, death, and resurrection is also an invitation to know and experience the divine peace that comes from Jesus, being baptized into Christ's Paschal Mystery and living that mystery, living for others and for God. When we move "out of ourselves" in the action of love and service for God and neighbor we find our messianic peace that Christ announces today in the words, "Peace be with you." God's peace is always "true" peace. God's peace is always serving and loving the "other." It is not feuding or at war with the "other." True peace performs the action of "building-up" each other. False peace performs the action of "tearing down" each other.

2) To forgive sin means to give the offender the freedom to leave the sin, leave the offense and grow into constructive, life-giving patterns. Forgiveness, like peace, needs to be instituted by a power beyond human power. That's why God chose Jesus to lead the way. Jesus institutes formal, divine forgiveness. Not all cultures societies or nation states believe in divinely founded

forgiveness. Without forgiveness, true and divine, we are stuck in our sins with no hope of recovery, no hope of improving. Keeping us in our sins is a human trait. Forgiving sins is a divine trait.

3)The third action conveyed to us by Jesus is the dynamic of coming to belief in Jesus. This is perhaps the most important action of today's gospel. If we believe in the person of Jesus, that He is who He says He is, the divine Son of God, crucified, dead, and risen, then the understanding of peace and forgiveness, the practice of peace and forgiveness, and the experience of knowing peace and forgiveness will follow. We must all some day say with Thomas the Apostle in complete belief, "My Lord and My God."

When Pope John Paul made his appearance in Poland for the first time as Pope, he visited with messages of peace, forgiveness, and belief. The then ruling military leader, Jeruzalski, a puppet for the Soviet Union, questioned under what credentials the Pope would visit Poland and why come with messages of peace, forgiveness, and belief? Poland had all those things through the Soviet Union. Pope John Paul responded, "I

have these messages from a power beyond human power. They are divinely begun, divinely sustained, and divinely brought to fulfillment.” The Pope also stated that these three messages are too important to be left in the management of mere mortals. What we speak in these three actions are timeless, eternal, and of God. The Polish General simply shook in fear when he heard the words of the Pope. When asked by his Soviet superiors why he shook so much in the presence of the Pope, Jeruzalski answered, “It’s pretty tough to compete with God.”

Let us Pray: *Lord God, through Your Son You have given us peace, forgiveness, and belief. Make us ever thankful for the mercies you extend us through Your divine gifts and help us to live in Your peace, practice your forgiveness, and believe in You. Amen.*

Prayer for Pope Benedict XVI
for Divine Mercy Sunday

Lord, source of eternal life and truth, give to your shepherd, Benedict, a spirit of courage and right judgment, a spirit of knowledge and love. By governing with fidelity those entrusted to his care, may he, as successor to the Apostle Peter and Vicar of Christ, build your Church into a

sacrament of peace, forgiveness, and fullness of belief for all the world. Amen.

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