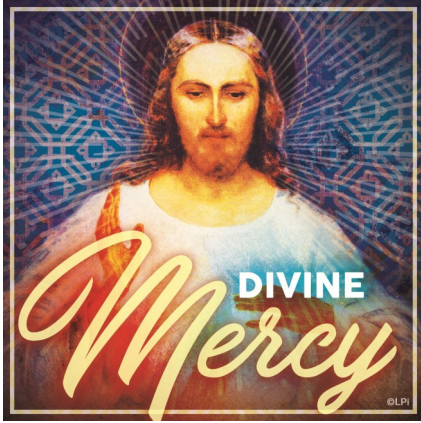


FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Christ is Risen! It is easy to think the resurrection belongs to the past. But He is risen today and is present in the sacraments. May we all have an encounter with Him this Easter. We are now in 50 days of feasting after 40 days of fasting. One of the first appearances after His Resurrection was to the disciples who left Him, abandoned Him. Yet in His mercy, He is not waiting for them to return but He is looking for them. Today, we celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday. Below is an excerpt from the Diary of St. Faustina Kowalska, the secretary of Christ's Divine Mercy who He appeared to and conversed with throughout her life. If you don't have a copy of the Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska - Divine Mercy in My Soul, get one and read it!

Conversation of the Merciful God with a Sinful Soul

Jesus: Be not afraid of your Savior, O sinful soul. I make the first move to come to you, for I know that by yourself you are unable to lift yourself to me. Child, do not run away from your Father; be willing to talk openly with your God of mercy who wants to speak words of pardon and lavish his graces on you. How dear your soul is to Me! I have inscribed your name upon My hand; you are engraved as a deep wound in My Heart.

Soul: Lord, I hear your voice calling me to turn back from the path of sin, but I have neither the strength nor the courage to do so.

Jesus: I am your strength; I will help you in the struggle.

Soul: Lord, I recognize your holiness, and I fear You.

Jesus: My child, do you fear the God of mercy? My holiness does not prevent Me from being merciful. Behold, for you I have established a throne of mercy on earth-the tabernacle-and from this throne I desire to enter into your heart. I am not surrounded by a retinue or guards. You can come to me at any moment, at any time; I want to speak to you and desire to grant you grace.

Soul: Lord, I doubt that You will pardon my numerous sins; my misery fills me with fright.

Jesus: My mercy is greater than your sins and those of the entire world. Who can measure the extent of my goodness? For you I descended from heaven to earth; for you I allowed myself to be nailed to the cross; for you I let my Sacred Heart be pierced with a lance, thus opening wide the source of mercy for you. Come, then, with trust to draw graces from this fountain. I never reject a contrite heart. Your misery has disappeared in the depths of My mercy. Do not argue with Me about your wretchedness. You will give me pleasure if you hand over to me all your troubles and griefs. I shall heap upon you the treasures of My grace.

Just a word on the passing of Pope Francis. The timing of Pope Francis' death is an important message for us. His first day of the other life was Easter Monday. His last full day on this earth was Easter Sunday. What an overwhelming declaration that we believe not only in some spiritual afterlife, but we believe in the promise of the resurrection of the body. This is the main declaration of our faith. We believe not only in some spiritual afterlife but that our very flesh is destined to participate in eternal life. Pope Francis is now encountering the Mercy of the Lord. He was a Pope who preached the message of Mercy, so let us pray that he is open to receive that Mercy deeply into his own life, that the message of Easter would be fully lived and experienced by him. Religion is either the honest quest for the satisfaction of the deepest desires of our hearts or it is a dangerous, divisive, harmful waste of time. Take the time to look at the deepest yearnings and desires of your heart. Christianity is meant to be an honest quest for the satisfaction of the deepest yearnings of our hearts. We desire a love, a joy, a peace, a happiness, a beauty, a satisfaction that lasts forever. May Pope Francis rest in peace!

Peace,