

Sunday 19th April 2020

Divine Mercy Sunday



Today is the last day of the Easter Octave, which is the whole eight days of Easter Week (Sunday to Sunday) when we celebrate the tremendous Feast of Easter every day for the whole eight days, because it is the most important event in our Faith and the fate of the human race. Today is the day we remember the momentous words which St. Thomas eventually said, after first refusing to believe, “My Lord and my God!” Thanks to the devotion of Pope St. John Paul II it is also the Feast of the Divine Mercy.

As soon as we remind ourselves that the name of Our Lord and God is in fact, Jesus, which means Saviour, we are reminded that all that our God experienced in the Second Person of the Trinity, made flesh, was for our sake and for our salvation. Salvation is a tame word. It means that He came to save us, because without Him and His Salvation we are not saved. None of us! It is not a matter of life and death, it is very simply eternal life and eternal death.

We are saved because of the generous love of God shown in his Mercy, which is presented in Jesus. The image of the Divine Mercy is not an artistic image which appeals to everyone. Some might prefer the Sacred Heart, others may choose not to have an artistic image, but whatever your own taste, the message is the same. The Love of God is revealed in Jesus, in His Sacred Heart and His Divine Mercy. The Sacred Heart focuses simply on the Love, shown in a wounded heart in a wounded Jesus. The Divine Mercy invites us to engage with the image through the shafts of light, still in an image of Jesus showing the wounds of His Passion. Blue symbolises water and red, blood. The New Testament tells us that we are saved, “by the water and the blood”. We are saved by Baptism which brings us into relationship with the Trinity through union with Jesus and the Eucharist unites us further and continuously ‘in communion’ with the Body (and Blood) of Christ, which is Jesus himself and also His Church, the Body of which he is the Head.

As we celebrate this Feast of Divine Mercy, the Holy Father has decreed that this Mercy may be celebrated by the granting of a Plenary Indulgence under relaxed conditions for people with the coronavirus, people who support them medically, physically, or through prayer and for just about anyone. To get full information about the Indulgence, Google, or other web search for [Plenary Indulgence coronavirus].

Masses in the Sacred Heart will continue to be streamed this week, but we are changing our days. Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Friday will be Fr. Peter and Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday will be Fr. Gerard. Many thanks to all of you who join us and each other through the live streaming and who send us emails to let us know that you are there.

If you want a little more, then I can recommend an on-line retreat given by Monsignor John Armitage, Rector of Walsingham. I know John well, having spent some years in seminary with him. He is a tremendous, captivating speaker who can express great spiritual truths in a simple

and accessible way. His 8 day retreat starts this Sunday, 19th April, after Compline (Night Prayer) at 8.00pm on the Walsingham web site – www.walsingham.org.uk .

Also from Walsingham is a set of talks on aspects of the Faith by Fr. Stephen Wang, also a very good and informative speaker. He will give 20, half hour videos on the Walsingham web site beginning Monday 27th April and shown at 10.30am and 4.00pm each day.

Please remember in your prayers those who are sick, those who are experiencing any type of hardship, those who support them either professionally, as family or as neighbours. Please also remember in your prayers those who have died, including Aiden Stephenson, from Barrowford, who died on 15th April aged 96years, Tony Wilson originally from Colne but living in Australia for many years who died on 9th April aged 84years and June Connolly who died on the 11th April aged 78years. May their souls, and the souls of all the Faithful Departed, rest in Peace. Amen.

God bless you all and keep you safe. Pray for each other.

Fr. Peter