

The 2nd Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday)

April 28, 2019

The Second Sunday of Easter, the Sunday where we also celebrate Divine Mercy. What a great time to celebrate the Divine Mercy of Our Lord, immediately following the huge events of His Passion, Death, and Resurrection. Mercy is the pinnacle of His Reconciliation. He takes away our sins, or takes on our sins, and then His mercy just raises us up renews ussets us totally free once again!

We see that freedom powerfully alive in the 1st Reading today..... the power of His resurrection alive in the Apostles “Many signs and wonders were done among the people at the hands of the apostles....they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and mats so that when Peter came by, at least His shadow might fall on one or other of them.” Wow what great Faith. So, where is our Faith? Where is your faith and mine? What do you believe about the sick, the suffering, those with heavy burdens? What hope do you hold for them? Do you believe that they can be healed? Do you believe God wants to heal them? Why is it not happening? Why are there so many who do not get well? Is it just another great mystery?

I read once again that beautiful reflection during the Lenten Season, as I have for a number of years now: “The Church, often described as a hospital, contains too many patients who fail to get well, the Church, often described as a school, contains too many students who fail to get well, is this the Church’s witness to the world; sick and ignorant disciples who know not the Christ whom they claim as Lord.” It’s a very evocative declaration, and might even appear offensive to some people. However, it certainly holds an enormous truth in terms of the mystery that is our God.

Let’s take a look at it in the context of today’s Gospel, which on a surface level seems very simple and direct. But, let’s not look at the story on just a superficial level, let’s look deeply at what was happening. It was a large story and teaching about Hurt, Brokenness, and Isolationism, and not being able to understand the events or mysteries of one’s life. The Promises of Jesus, the whole way along to Jerusalem had been mostly misunderstood. What is He talking about? What does He mean by that?

Now, we are on the back side of all of those major events the Passion, Death, and Resurrection, of the Lord.

The apostles are astounded Can you tell me what just happened to all of us? What happened to Jesus our leader? The word is coming through! He is Risen! Nah! How could that be? Oh yes, it is real all right!He has appeared to Simon! Now, He enters “Peace be with you.” When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet..... Why? Why did He do that? What was so important about the wounds?

Number one — they were a declaration that it was Him, indeed. He had gone through this for them, and for us! There is a tendency to hide the wounds, because of our belief that displaying them is a sign of weakness. Weakness does not create respect. In fact, the contrary may be true. There is a great and subtle Gospel Truth here the wounds and the struggle are not signs of weakness, but the Holy Ground in which true Encounter with the Risen Christ may take place.

Those who don't disguise their own struggles, and who live through them are the real Hope of the World, and the Hope for the World. These are the ones who can give hope to others. A real understanding of their own pain enables them to convert their weakness into strength in Him, and to then offer their own experience as a source of healing for others.

Let me tell you this story about a single, working mother who lives in New York. In a period of six years, she saw her three sons shot dead, the youngest of them shot at the doorway of her own home. The frame of her door still holds the marks of the bullets fired at her youngest son. Although she doesn't always notice it, she is always aware of its presence. Why don't you have the frame repaired, friends often ask her. She responds the same always, “I want those holes to be a constant reminder that a young man lost his life at that spot. When you fix things, people tend to forget.”

She says she was heartbroken by these deaths, each one of them. She says in the beginning, she wished her sons had never been born. But she says God has lead her through all of this. In the beginning, there was hopelessness, now there is sorrow in their deaths, but there is some unbelievable joy in her life. If I had not had my three sons, I would not be the person I am today. They help me to be strong. They help me not to be selfish. She refuses to be trapped by fear and a sense of victimhood. Instead, she reaches out to others. She has become a powerful and

eloquent advocate for gun control and community responsibility, talking at schools and many other gatherings of youth and adults. She has started a support group for mothers in a similar situation. She relives her grief every time a child is killed in the neighborhood, and she visits the family to share their grief. She says, “When you fix things, people tend to forget.”

Maybe this is why Jesus kept the mark of His wounds on His Risen Body. So the question is: What are your wounds?? Who knows about them? Are they healed? Are you open to having them healed? Remember Respectable Sins..... Do you just tolerate them? Or, do you do something about them?

Some people genuinely live in hope of healing, and actually have a plan in place for healing their wounds. Some do not they simply blame somebody else If it weren't for this or that! Look around you, there are people everyday who have worked on healing their wounds, and there are some who have not! The difference is clearly noticeable Everyday !

— Fr. Gerry Hurley