**Divine Mercy Sunday – April 10, 2021 – TCSF**

**The Sacred Heart of Jesus that Opens the way to Heaven**

Artwork has a particular power. Whether it is music, paintings, landscaping – anything that can be see through the human eye – it has a certain power over us because our brains begin to process what lies before us. That is why whenever we see something beautiful, we are a rest. At the same time, when we see something jarring or stark, it actually changes our mood. Today, on Divine Mercy Sunday, the Second Sunday after Easter Sunday, we are given quite a heavenly gift – a picture of Jesus. Now we have seen many nice pictures of Jesus – as a shepherd, as a preacher, around the table at the Last Supper, or even the stark picture of Jesus on the Cross – but the Divine Mercy painting is something different. It is not the human artist who came up with the colors, the position of Jesus blessing the viewer, or the red and white light coming from His heart, but it was Jesus Himself!

In 1931, Our Lord appeared to St. Faustina in a vision. She saw Jesus clothed in a white garment with His right hand raised in blessing. His left hand was touching His garment in the area of the Heart, from where two large rays came forth, one red and the other pale. After gazing intently at the Lord in silence, her soul filled with awe, but also with great joy. Jesus said to her.

**Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You. I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over [its] enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I Myself will defend it as My own glory (Diary, 47, 48). I am offering people a vessel with which they are to keep coming for graces to the fountain of mercy. That vessel is this image with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You (327). I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel, and [then] throughout the world (47).**

At the request of her spiritual director, St. Faustina asked the Lord about the meaning of the rays in the image. She heard these words in reply:

**The two rays denote Blood and Water. The pale ray stands for the Water which makes souls righteous. The red ray stands for the Blood which is the life of souls. These two rays issued forth from the depths of My tender mercy when My agonized Heart was opened by a lance on the Cross. Happy is the one who will dwell in their shelter, for the just hand of God shall not lay hold of him (299). By means of this image I shall grant many graces to souls. It is to be a reminder of the demands of My mercy, because even the strongest faith is of no avail without works (742).**

These words indicate that the Image represents the graces of Divine Mercy poured out upon the world, especially through Baptism and the Eucharist.

So why this long description about the image? Well first, I think whenever Jesus does something miraculous that affects the whole world, Catholic priests should make sure that Catholic parents are teaching this to their children. Jesus doesn’t speak to nuns and then have their conversation go viral all that often!

Secondly, and more importantly, it is to recall what Jesus is really trying to show us in this picture. Is it just another nice picture of Jesus? Well its origins directly from heaven would say otherwise. It is a glimpse into heaven of what God wants to tell us about mercy. Mercy is not just being nice. God is kind to all that he met with rare, yet consistent exception with the corruption of the Pharisees and Sadducees. He welcomed sinners regardless of the level of their sin. Like Zacchaeus the tax collect, Mary Magdalene the prostitute, Saul the violent persecution of Christians. He spoke to them. In speaking to them, he showed them mercy. What exactly is mercy? Loving acceptance by God after one turns away from their sins. At its core, mercy is forgiveness. The bible speaks of God’s love for sinners – that is, for all of us.

Jesus said to him, “Have you come to believe because you have seen me?

Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.” May we believe in what lies before us today in the Eucharist, God’s love and mercy and call to holiness.