

Rededication of the Diocese of Honolulu to The Divine Mercy

From The Wanderer Online Daily Website
April 22, 2015

(Editor's Note: Bishop Larry Silva of Honolulu on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 12, rededicated his diocese to the Divine Mercy. The rededication took place at a Sunday evening Mass at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, Pearl City, Oahu. He first dedicated the diocese to the Divine Mercy on Sunday, April 23, 2006, at Star of the Sea Church, Honolulu. The Wanderer spoke by phone with Bishop Silva on April 15. His Excellency said he rededicated his diocese "at the request of one of the parishioners" who is very "concerned about our state of affairs, culturally," and sees the need for Divine Mercy, and also in view of the upcoming Year of Mercy, proclaimed by Pope Francis. Those in attendance at that Mass were mostly parishioners, he said, but some were from other parts of the diocese. Asked about reaction to the rededication, Bishop Silva said that "people are happy that we did it." His rededication homily, he said, contrasts "Divine Mercy with diabolical mercy" — "Satan has kind of twisted it...to say" that "God is so merciful, who cares if you sin?" Below are the texts of Bishop Silva's rededication prayer and his homily at the Divine Mercy Sunday Mass at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church. Bishop Silva was ordained bishop of Honolulu on July 21, 2005.)

+ + +

Rededication of the Honolulu Diocese to The Divine Mercy **Divine Mercy Sunday - April 12, 2015**

Merciful Jesus, we come before your sacred image, revealed so many decades ago to St. Faustina and now venerated throughout the world. It reminds us that you are no longer dead but alive, risen from the dead. It recalls how your heart was pierced by our sins yet radiates the light of your Divine Mercy.

The waters of baptism that flow from your wounded heart drown our sins and nourish the good seed of compassion within us. The blood that pours out of your open heart flows in our veins when we receive it in the Eucharist and gives our listless spirits a vitality that could only come from your merciful love.

As the pastor you have appointed to guide your flock here in these Hawaiian Islands, I rededicate this entire Diocese of Honolulu to your Divine Mercy.

Remind us that it is not our own merits, our own talents, or our own resources that enable us to forgive sins, but only the Holy Spirit you have breathed out upon us. Let your pierced heart open our hearts to compassion for the poor, to victims of violence, and to the sinner. Let your fountain of living water flow through us, so that in your merciful Name we may cleanse and refresh all who are soiled by the sordid allurements of this world or parched with loneliness, depression, or hopelessness. Let the blood flowing from your side transfuse us, so that we can transform a culture of death into a culture of life.

As we rededicate these many islands to your Divine Mercy, we beg you to touch the hearts and souls of young men in our community to dedicate their lives to you as priests or deacons, and to renew the religious communities who serve us by filling their ranks with women and men who are in love with you and with your people, Lord Jesus.

As we rededicate the Diocese of Honolulu to your Divine Mercy, make us a merciful people. Jesus, we trust in you.

The Most Rev. Larry Silva
Bishop of Honolulu

+ + +

**Homily of the Most Rev. Larry Silva
Bishop of Honolulu
Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday) April 12, 2015
Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, Pearl City, Oahu**

Of course we are here to celebrate Divine Mercy, that unbelievable, overwhelming, magnanimous, patient, and loving attribute of God that pursues us like a Hound of Heaven to keep us close to him when we have strayed away and sinned.

It is a mercy that we see so clearly in today's gospel. Jesus first encounters his closest friends who abandoned him in his greatest hour of need, including three who fell asleep when he begged them to pray for him, and one who denied he even knew him, not once, not twice, but three times.

His first words to them are, "Peace be with you!" Instead of breathing out well deserved scoldings, he breathes on them the gift of the Holy Spirit. Instead of chiding them for being so untrustworthy, he entrusts a mission to them, his own mission of forgiving sins. When one of them who was not with them when he first appeared expressed the greatest doubt and skepticism, he appears to him and playfully challenges him to satisfy his doubts.

This is the Divine Mercy that led Jesus to forgive those who cruelly and unjustly condemned him to a horrifying death by crucifixion; that shocked a disciple who thought he understood its depths when he suggested it meant forgiving seven times by telling him that it was seventy times seven times that was closer to the reality.

This is the Divine Mercy that spared not even the Son of God to give his life so that wayward humanity could be saved.

This is the Divine Mercy expressed in a father who had been as much as told to drop dead by his wayward son, yet who welcomes him back with great festivity when his son shows even a bit of remorse. Such mercy is so difficult to comprehend, yet so very real.

Then there is diabolical mercy. Recently I read the following as a reaction to those who insist on the religious freedom to believe that true marriage can only be between one man and one woman.

“To my Christian friends . . . the Jesus of the Bible was a man who, whenever he countered individuals accused of some unpardonable sin, usually sat down and broke bread with them. He offered grace, forgiveness, and love”

[Joel Mathis, Honolulu Star-Advertiser, April 5, 2015, p. E6.]

It is the nature of the devil to take the truth and to twist it to his perverse purposes. Here the author — and many others in our culture today — point out the truth of Jesus’ magnanimous mercy, but they presume that Jesus’ mercy does not demand conversion from sin. They presume that because Jesus is so merciful and so loving, he really does not care whether we sin or not. He is blind to sin, if he believes there is such a thing at all, because he is just so blindly in love with every person.

Such twisted thinking takes the truth and distorts it so that it is no longer the truth, but just the opposite. If we follow this path of thinking to its logical conclusion, then we have to ask what significance Jesus has anyway — or any kind of savior for that matter

If there is no sin from which we need to be saved, then why bother approaching the throne of mercy? If grace is so cheap that we can snap our fingers at God to order it up, then why in the world did Jesus bother to suffer so much for us? Why was he willing to be so wounded, and from those wounds to pour out water and blood, to wash us and nourish us, if such a washing was never really needed in the first place?

Why did Jesus not order Sr. Faustina to direct the painting of his portrait with a wink in his eye, winking at every sin and perversion we could engage in because it really does not matter?

Instead Jesus ordered Sr. Faustina to have his portrait painted with a huge wound in his heart, a wound that bleeds because it is so broken by what sin has done to us; a wound that invites us to approach it so that our filth can be washed in the water as in an ocean of mercy.

Perhaps this is why the number of people who regularly confess their sins today is so low. We have been deceived by a diabolical notion of mercy that convinces us that God’s love is so immense that there is no possibility of punishment. Perhaps this is why so few people approach the Lord Jesus to worship him, to cry out, “My Lord and my God,” since if there is no need for a Savior, then why give any time to Jesus?

Satan, our ancient enemy, is so clever. He does not portray Jesus as a harsh judge who

is ready to condemn us for the slightest transgression of the law. The devil takes the truth of the immensity of God's mercy and distorts it to convince us that there is nothing we could do that would need the washing of mercy at all, because Jesus simply does not care if we sin or not.

This is diabolical mercy. It is this diabolical mercy that Divine Mercy wants to destroy. Jesus said, "Repent, and believe in the gospel!" But if he does not care if we sin, why should he care if we repent?

Divine Mercy knows very well that we are sinners, that we allow ourselves to be deceived as easily as our first parents allowed themselves to be deceived.

Divine Mercy sees very clearly our filth and our anemia, and washes us with water and blood from the wounded side of Jesus, not to affirm us in our sinfulness, but to love us into conversion.

Divine Mercy does sit down and break bread with the greatest of sinners, but never to overlook our sins, but rather to allow Jesus' love to so wound our hearts that we want to repent. He opens his heart to us sinners so that we will no longer consider God's commandments as burdensome but as our path to freedom and joy.

There is a great struggle these days between the subtle but destructive diabolical mercy, which winks at sin, and the Divine Mercy, which looks piercingly at sin and invites the sinner to turn away and to be washed in the eternal flow of water and blood that comes forth from the wounded side of Jesus.

We can so easily be led astray. This is why it is so important to always recognize our need for a Savior and to cry out to him, "My Lord and my God." This is why it is essential not to be afraid but to always cry out, "**Jesus, I trust in you!**"