

Father's Notes

April 27, 2025

Today, the church celebrates a special feast called Divine Mercy Sunday. Perhaps you have seen the famous image of Jesus with the two rays emanating from His heart. The image comes from a series of revelation to a Polish nun, Faustina Kowalska. She would become a Saint and these encounters were eventually approved by the church and written in her diary called "Divine Mercy in My Soul".

Divine Mercy Sunday takes place on the Sunday after Easter, but why celebrate this feast? Well to understand the wonders of this day, we must remember the effects of sin in our lives. Our faith teaches that when we sin, two things happen: we damage our relationship with God (sometimes called guilt) and we also damage the created order, including ourselves and others.

Through the Sacrament of Confession, our guilt is completely wiped away. However, the effects of that sin which the church calls temporal punishment may still need healing. Every sin, no matter how great, is forgiven by God when we turn to Him with trust and repentance. But there are effects that remain from our choices and actions.

Think of it like this: if a child breaks a neighbor's window and says he/she is sorry, they can be forgiven, but the window is still broken! Temporal punishment is not God's wrath—it's part of His loving justice and a means for our sanctification. It allows us to cooperate with grace to repair the harm done by sin.

Here's where Divine Mercy becomes especially powerful. Certain prayers and actions called indulgences offer what's called a partial remission of temporal punishment. But listen to these words of Jesus to St. Faustina:

"The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion (on Divine Mercy Sunday) shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment" (Diary, 699).

If you received Holy Communion this weekend and have been to confession with no grave sins, you will have **A COMPLETE REMOVAL OF ALL TEMPORAL PUNISHMENT!** If you haven't been to confession, don't despair. The Church does allow a 20-day window to make the confession, providing that we make an effort to improve and remove serious sin from our lives.

In short, Divine Mercy does not cancel God's justice, but rather fulfills it through love. By embracing Divine Mercy, we not only receive God's forgiveness, but are also drawn into the healing and restoration of all that sin has broken. And that is something to celebrate!

God bless,
Fr. Ben
Parochial Vicar