

Knights Lecture

Today is the Second Sunday of Easter, otherwise known as Divine Mercy Sunday. The placement of Divine Mercy Sunday as the Sunday after our celebration of Jesus's Resurrection from the dead is highly symbolic. The image of Divine Mercy illustrates the blood and water which flowed forth from the side of Christ, which was pierced after He died for our sins on the cross to conclude his brutal Passion which started in the Garden of Gethsemane, and went Pilot, to the Pillar he was scourged at, up the road to Calvary and concluded on the mount called Golgotha with his crucifixion. Along with being shut out of heaven and destruction of the perfect communion mankind had with God, we were sentenced to a limited life on earth which will eventually end in death as an effect of the original sin which was committed by Eve and then Adam. Not having original sin meant that Jesus was not required to fulfill the sentence that each of us has been given. We were saved from an eternity of death by His death; through His divine mercy the gates of heaven were opened for us. Mercy, which we can give to everyone we meet in its most fundamental form, Charity, is the first principle of the Knights of Columbus. The great saint and mystic Catherine of Siena says this about Charity,

“No virtue can have life in itself except through charity, and humility, which is the foster-mother and nurse of charity. In self-knowledge, then, you will humble yourself, seeing that, in yourself, you do not even exist; for your very being, as you will learn, is derived from Me, since I have loved both you and others before you were in existence, and that, through the ineffable love which I had for you, and re-created you in the Blood of My only begotten Son, split with so great a fire of love.”

Yesterday, on the Eve of the Solemnity of Divine Mercy Sunday Pope Francis presented a Papal Bull of Indiction, which announced that on December 8 an Extraordinary Jubilee year of Mercy will begin. In addition to the fiftieth year since the institution of Vatican II, why make the year of Mercy an extraordinary Jubilee year? Could it be that he is making a statement? Asking for the persecution of Christians in the Middle East to come to an end? For the Christians who are being persecuted to show mercy towards their persecutors? Or could it be that he is asking for all Christians to show Mercy, compassion, and charity towards everyone especially those who have persecuted us in the past and are persecuting us now? By showing mercy and exercising charity in all things we can infect our communities, we can infect our countries, and we can infect our world with charity, and convert our enemies from a spirit of persecution to a life of hope in Christ. Wouldn't that be something to be Jubilant about?