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DIVINE MERCY IN OUR LIVES

Most of us would have heard of the Divine Mercy and the devotion given to the world by Christ through St Faustina. Our Lord was reaffirming to the world the central message of the Gospel throughout the ages. The Divine Mercy, through the saving atonement of Christ, leads us into salvation, to be with the most Holy Trinity forever in Heaven. The same Divine Mercy of God was embraced by St Francis and St Clare to follow the poor, crucified Lord, as minors rebuilding a troubled Church with faith, hope and charity.

Indeed, Divine Mercy is for the whole Church, whether we are Franciscans, Benedictines, or Jesuits. We are all united in one faith, one Lord and one Baptism. As Franciscans, let us be mindful of our special calling to be instruments of mercy to others especially by our kindness, patience and peace.

Within the Church, we have many who are no longer formed in the faith, who do not have an appreciation of the power and graces of the Sacraments. The other day after a school Mass, I heard parents say “Oh we like coming to these events of our children.” What happened to the redemption of Christ, His saving Sacrifice made present on our altars, the reception of His saving Word, and of the Sacred Body and Blood?

With so many today who do not know the Holy Mass or do not participate in the Eucharistic Mystery, Our Lord has asked us to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, for the conversion of the world, especially those in most need of the Mercy of Christ. As Franciscans we need to value the Eucharistic heritage of the Franciscan tradition and our fidelity to the Catholic Faith. Cafeteria Catholicism is not Franciscan. Yes, none of us is perfect and we may find some of the demands of the Gospel as handed down by the Church difficult, but that does not mean that we know better than the Magisterium of the Church. Let us remember that St Francis was the Catholic and Apostolic Man!

Our Lord’s message to St Faustina has been approved by the Church. Now, Low Sunday (after the conclusion of the Easter Octave) is also known as Divine Mercy Sunday. The Image of the Divine Mercy calls us to trust in Christ. “Jesus I trust in You” is the aspiration at the bottom of the image of Christ. This prayer also calls us to surrender to Divine Providence, to imitate the fiat of Our Lady, which we see is the essence of the Saints. St Francis and St Clare embraced the Divine Master, surrendering to the call of the poor crucified Christ to live His Gospel as minors.

As Franciscans, we seek to follow the poor, crucified, Lord in union with His Blessed Mother, in our daily life with its difficulties and challenges We live in a society that is becoming increasingly Godless whether through lost belief or indifference. The peace of Christ and the pledge of eternal life matters less in a society where the pleasure and comfort of now is of the utmost importance. For many, Christ and the Gospel is simply a nice fairy

tale. So many Catholics deprive themselves of the Mercy of God flowing through the Mass and the confessional. Many in the Church are now confused about the Faith and many publicly dissent from the Faith, especially in the area of morals.

We, as Catholics and Franciscans, need to be concerned for those who are lost or indifferent to the Faith .We need to implore the mercy of Christ, upon ourselves and the world. This has been stressed by Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict. More than ever, we who have been blessed with the gift of faith need to intercede for those around us, including family members and friends, who do not know, love or adore Jesus Christ as our Lord and God.

The Chaplet of Divine Mercy is a prayer which expresses the reality of the doctrine of the Mass. This devotion, prayed on Rosary beads, implores the graces of the Eucharistic Sacrifice of Jesus Christ to wash over the troubled and lost hearts of the prodigal children of God. May we with renewed vigour offer our daily prayers, especially the prayer of the Church.

As Franciscans, when we pray the Prayer of the Church (the breviary) we offer it in union with the whole mystical Body of Christ for the needs of the world as well as praising the Holy Trinity. May we also pray the chaplet of Divine Mercy for those in most need of God's Divine Mercy and remember that powerful aspiration, "Jesus I trust in You".

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