

Dear Friends,

I hope that all of you remain healthy and safe as we continue to shelter in place. This weekend is the Second Sunday of Easter, also known as Divine Mercy Sunday. For this reason, I once again wish all of you a very Happy Easter! So why is the Second Sunday of Easter designated as Divine Mercy Sunday? A little history: St. Maria Faustina Kowalska, a 20th century Polish nun, was stationed at a convent in Plock, Poland, where at the age of 25 (the year was 1930), received a series of visions from Jesus. At the time, St. Faustina was afflicted with tuberculosis and Jesus actually appeared to her in her convent cell wearing a white robe with red and white rays emanating from His Sacred Heart. Our Blessed Lord instructed her to paint a picture of this apparition and to provide a caption, which read, "Jesus, I trust in You." The purpose of this revelation was to encourage all of humankind to pray for peace and mercy because He had told her that a great, great war was approaching and that millions of innocent people all over the world would die. Christ told her that if only people would have faith in Him, He would show the souls of all humanity His Divine Mercy. While millions perished as a result of this terrible war, the underlying effect of His Mercy would essentially revolve around the salvation of their precious souls, specifically, during the Second Sunday of Easter. In other words, if people prayed for the eternal salvation of their souls, then He would bless their souls in a very special way.

You see, Jesus was warning St. Faustina that a terrible war steeped in Nazism would plague the world and cause widespread and violent suffering. As we all know, the best way to fight evil is to love and to show mercy towards all - even to our greatest of enemies. Now, we live in the temporal world and we might ask ourselves why Jesus Himself did not stop the spread of Hitler's evil regime and persecutions. Simply put, the primary role of Jesus Christ was to redeem us from our sins in order that we might all inherit life everlasting. While miracles do happen in the temporal order, God's mission focuses on immortal souls and that which pertains to the supernatural order, or the spiritual realm. God did not allow His Son to suffer death in order that we might enjoy eternal life on earth (this planet) and in this present reality, but in His Kingdom of Everlasting Life, or Heaven. If this present reality had been God's sole concern, then Jesus would have never suffered or died; yet He had to ... and ultimately, where did He go? To Heaven!

We come to church on a regular basis so that we can pray for better health, prosperity, world peace, etc. Yet the main purpose of church worship has to do, first and foremost, with the eternal salvation of our immortal souls. The temporal order, the reality in which we presently exist, is transitory - it's here today and gone tomorrow ... but the "tomorrow" is what we must really focus upon because that "tomorrow" is eternal. When we die, our bodies decay in the ground, but death is not the end, is it? No, our immortal souls live on forever and ever - for eternity. Therefore, the message of Easter is about sharing everlasting life with Jesus in Heaven.

Does Jesus care about our world and our place in it? Of course He does! After all, He Himself created it. He even proved so by healing the sick, raising the dead and miraculously feeding the hungry. Christ dispensed miracles as He saw fit, and as God, that was His prerogative. However this life, isn't the be-all and end-all of our ontological existence. Rather, the be-all and end-all; the purpose of our lives here on earth is to prepare for sharing in God's eternal glory with The Resurrected Jesus in Paradise, i.e., Heaven!

In the meantime, we live in the here and the now. We must do our best to navigate through the treacherous waters of this world and this current life. Jesus does care. He knows what it is to suffer, and to fear and to experience loss and disappointment and hurt. He knows all of this because He lived as one of us in our world 2,000 years ago. Therefore, given what I have written above, it is absolutely important to pray for an end to Covid-19, just as Christ Himself asked St. Faustina to pray for an end to the evil of Nazism. Heck, she herself suffered and died because of tuberculosis! She

herself died from a pandemic almost 100 years ago. But the message relayed through her came from Jesus: "Jesus, I Trust in You."

"Jesus, I Trust in You." This weekend, we place our trust in God. We trust that those whose lives have been lost because of the Corona Virus may enjoy eternal paradise with Christ Jesus in Heaven. We trust that those who are dying because of this ferocious pandemic may be comforted by God's healing mercy. We trust that God, in His undying love for humanity and this planet, may come to our assistance during this difficult time. Like I referenced above, Jesus did (and absolutely, still does) dispense miracles. My friends, let us trust in Him. Never lose hope; have courage and have faith!

May God, in His Divine Mercy, bless us all with His healing and peace!

Love,  
Fr. Eric