

Divine Mercy Sunday

April 17, 2020

The psalm declares the great love of our God! “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his love is everlasting.” We rejoice in the love of our Lord as we celebrate Easter. However, further down in the psalm we see the word “mercy” repeated many times: “His mercy endures forever.” The reason we celebrate this day as Divine Mercy Sunday, is that for God -- love and mercy are the same thing.

The word used here in the original Hebrew is “*hesed*.” That word is translated sometimes as “love” and sometimes as “mercy.” Because for God they are one in the same thing. God shows his loving kindness to us in his mercy. He expresses his mercy lovingly. There is no separation between love and mercy for God. It was the loving mercy that Jesus showed to the disciples in the upper room when he appeared to them to share his peace. It was the merciful love that Jesus showed Thomas when he refused to believe that the Lord had risen. It was the love and mercy that flows from Jesus that allowed that first community to live together in such peace. It was that *hesed* that made it so that “all who believed were together and had all things in common” (Acts). Jesus shares that same loving mercy with us here and now. There is nothing that separates us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (cf. Rom 8:39). This love is our salvation, and it unites us with the whole Church since the beginning. We are living 2000 years removed from that day in the upper room with Jesus. But my sisters and brothers, “Although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls” (1 Pet). This is the power of the merciful love of God!

We have become unified in the one mission of mercy. As Pope Francis has said: “God needs [people] who can bring his forgiveness and his mercy into the world. It is the same mission that the Risen Lord gave to the disciples on the day after his Easter: ‘Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained”’ (Jn 20:21-23). This responsibility placed in your hands — we are responsible for it! — calls for a style of life consistent with the mission we have received... Being co-workers of mercy, therefore, presumes that we share the merciful love that we were the first to receive. It could not be otherwise.” (10 April 2018).

May we rejoice in the loving mercy of God. His love, his mercy, endures forever. We are recipients and missionaries of that merciful love. Recommit yourself to mercy today. Do not let any human weakness or pain keep you from forgiving, from loving. We have been set free by God’s mercy, so we can share his love and mercy with others freely. This is the day the Lord has made; may we rejoice and be glad. May we be true missionaries of the loving mercy of God. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet).