

Divine Mercy Sunday

A pastor was in the middle of his sermon when he noticed a man had fallen asleep with his head on his wife's shoulder. "Wake up your husband," Pastor snapped.

The wife smiled and replied, "You put him to sleep. You wake him up."

Dear Friends,

A blessed Happy Easter and Divine Mercy Sunday!

There is a story about St. Christopher, probably more legend than truth, which runs this way: As a youth, Christopher was gifted in every way, except faith. He was a big man physically, powerful, strong, goodhearted, mellow, and well-liked by all. He was also generous, using his physical strength to help others. His one fault was that he found it hard to believe in God. For him, the physical was what was real and everything else seemed unreal. However, he yearned to believe in God and deeply respected those who did believe. He lived his life in a certain honest agnosticism, unable to really believe in anything beyond what he could physically see, feel, and touch.

This, however, did not prevent him from using his gifts, especially his physical strength, to serve others. This became his refuge, generosity, and service. He became a ferryboat operator, spending his life helping to carry people across a dangerous river. One night, so the legend goes, during a storm, the ferryboat capsized and Christopher dove into the dark waters to rescue a young child. Carrying that child to the shore, he looked into its face and saw there the face of Christ. After that he believed, for he had seen the face of Christ. The very name, Christopher, contains the legend. Christopher means Christ-Bearer.

Fact or fiction? In either case, the story contains, within its very simplicity, a profound lesson. It gives us an answer, a practical one, to one of the most difficult questions of all: What should we do when our faith is weak? What should be our reaction in the face of the fact that God often seems silent, distant, dead? How do we move from believing only in the physical, from believing in the reality of only what we can see, feel, touch, taste, and smell, to believing in the existence of deeper, spiritual, realities?

This story fits in St. Thomas the apostles, where we read in the Gospel today. Jesus' reply to his questions was, "come and see for yourselves that I am real and not a ghost. We understand God mercy and love through his appearance to many people in so many ways.

Another significant aspect of God's love and mercy is that he comes to us and ask us to love him back. In all the encounter after resurrection the disciples never asked for Jesus to come, nor does he need to break down doors in order to approach his friends. Instead,

he came and stood among them. Mercy is always before us. We need to understand the mercy of God in our life. At the canonization of St. Faustina, Pope St. John Paul II said: "The cross, even after the Resurrection of the Son of God, speaks, and never ceases to speak, of God the Father, Who is absolutely faithful to His eternal love for man. ... Believing in this love means believing in mercy."

Like Thomas, we put up barriers in front of us. Let us pray that God's mercy is showered upon us and strengthens us to see God in us and in others.