

HOMILY FOR DIVINE MERCY – YEAR C

On this Feast of the Divine Mercy, in this special year dedicated to Mercy, I will briefly focus on how God uses the body to show his glory.

In the Gospels, Jesus appears to the 11 apostles two times after the Resurrection, once on Easter and again one week after Easter. In his first visit, he breathed on them and gave them the ability to forgive sins in the great sacrament of mercy - Reconciliation (John 20:23).

One week later, in his glorified body, Jesus is able to pass through doors once again, but he makes it clear that he is able to be touched. He commands Thomas to physically put his hands into his wounds and not just to look at him from afar. It is interesting to note that Jesus also said to Thomas that blessed are those who believe without seeing his body.

So, is His body not important? Of course it is important and necessary for our salvation, but He wants us to allow Him to use *our* own bodies to bring others to Him. In the reading from the Acts of the Apostles 5:12-16, it states that many signs and wonders were done among the people at the *hands* of the apostles. The people laid their sick on the streets so when the shadow from the body of Peter would touch them, they would be healed. The sick were being healed through their hands and through the shadows made by the bodies of the apostles.

The image of The Divine Mercy came about because of the physical appearance of Jesus to St. Faustina. She had a painting made of what she saw, and it represents Jesus coming to us and penetrating our darkness with the rays of mercy coming from His pierced heart. This image of Jesus, found in virtually every Catholic church in the world, reveals the mercy of God.

Although we cannot touch His actual body, except sacramentally in the Holy Eucharist, we can be reminded of the reality of His Resurrection and with living faith we can be healed. “Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed” (John 20:29).

We are deeply grateful to Pope St. John Paul II who expounded extensively on the dignity of the human body and our sexuality in his catechesis called “*Men and Women He Created Them - A Theology of the Body*.” The late Holy Father, reminded us who we truly are as men and women, why we were created by God and to whom are we meant to spend all eternity with - the Blessed Trinity. Pope St. John Paul II taught us that it is through the *body* of Mary, the Word became Flesh and dwelt among us and still dwells among us in the Holy Eucharist and within each of us who receive Him sacramentally in a state of grace. It is through the visible body that the reality of the invisible God is made manifest through His Mystical Body – the Church and within all our bodies as well. The Incarnation of Jesus Christ is denied by many and mocked by the Evil One, who wants to blind us to God’s unconditional love for us, as He did our first parents, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. We were originally created holy without stain or shame. Original sin has broken and corrupted us, but not completely. Christ came to redeem us to the Father, not to live unholy lives bound by sin and vice, but free to choose the good and Himself. God’s mercy is so sorely needed today because so many live as if Jesus did not redeem them and as if they were beyond His healing love and grace-filled remedies. The Divine Mercy image tells us otherwise.

This promise of mercy is offered to everyone on this Divine Mercy Sunday. We can still be healed and forgiven by the Body of Jesus working through the instruments of his priests in the Sacrament of Reconciliation; through reception of His Real Presence in the Eucharist; and through works of mercy to those in need. We can bring others to the Risen Christ in His glorified body, through our own bodies, just like the Apostles did from the beginning. What is needed is a living faith that allows the Lord to work through our bodies.



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