

FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,

Happy Easter!

Today we celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord! His Resurrection 2000 years ago is not just an event from history (and yes, it did really, historically happen... it is not a myth) which we remember every year. This event, rather, changes everything about the universe. When Adam and Eve sinned at the beginning of the world, the Original Grace – in which we were at peace with God, each other, ourselves, and the world – was lost. The world is broken! The Resurrection is the antidote to the Original Sin. The Good News, though, is that Jesus' Resurrection does MORE than restore us to the Original Innocence; it raises us to the heights of dignity within the created realm, for God Himself has united with our own flesh and blood, our soul and spirit!

This Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy called for by Pope Francis, begs us to call to mind this reality – the reality of the mercy of the Resurrection. While we were enemies with God, He came to make us right with Him. **Jesus paid a debt He didn't owe because we owed a debt we couldn't pay.** What grace! What mercy!

This is the Good News! This is the mercy of God. No matter how far we have fallen, no matter how grievous the sin, not matter how damaging our actions to God, ourselves, others or the world, God forgives. He chooses not to hold any grudges. He chooses only forgiveness. Pope Francis reminds us that God never grows weary of forgiving us. We may think that God is so much like us that He gets sick of us going to Him over and over about our sins. He does not. He perfectly knows our weakness, and perfectly forgives all. The Pope goes on to say that it is *we* who grow weary of asking for forgiveness.

I implore you, never grow weary of returning to the Lord to ask for forgiveness. Never tire of your own weakness. Never despair at your inability to keep resolutions. Never become despondent because of your addictions and bad habits. Rather, persevere in returning to the Lord. It is only when we throw in the towel and say, "There's no hope for me," that the failure happens. It is this attitude that often leads us deeper into sin and further from God. All the while, God is waiting, longing for our return to Him. If we but show the least contrition, and turn to Him, He will pick us up and carry us back to His Heart. There are no strings attached – only LOVE! Remember the parable of the Prodigal Son – when the younger son is still a long way off, the father drops everything to run out to meet him. He doesn't put him in the dog-house, but welcomes his son back with open arms, back into his family ... and they even hold a huge party for his return.

This is the Good News. Jesus rose to break the bonds of sin and death. He rose to break us from our despair. While it may seem that we are still in the bondage of sin, and (looking at the world) that everything is going to "hell in a handbasket," the TRUTH is that the war has already been won... only the news has not yet leaked out!

Next Sunday is **Divine Mercy Sunday**. We focus on God's mercy in a special way on that day. Jesus promised that on that Feast,

The soul that will go to confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. (*Divine Mercy in My Soul: Diary of St. Faustina, 699*)

That's it. No other strings. Communion and confession and we are set free. Please, come and receive God's Infinite Mercy. Be immersed in this Ocean of Mercy. Do not be afraid of God or His punishments! If you are far from Him, come back to His Heart. Next Sunday – Jesus promises "NO PUNISHMENTS!" You can check the bulletin for all of the times I will be available for Confession next Sunday. I beg you, if you have been far from God, avail yourself of the Sacraments and be drawn deep into His love!

Peace to you this holy day, and with all who love the Lord in simplicity of heart. Happy Easter.