**2ndSUNDAY OF EASTER [7th April, 2013]**

READINGS: Acts 5:12-16/ Rev. 1:9-13, 17-19/ John 20:19-31

THEME: DIVINE MERCY

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

Last weekend we commemorated the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Why did He undergo that experience for us? Jesus suffered, died and resurrected so that we might be saved from our sins. Hence at His very first meeting with His disciples after his resurrection, Jesus forgave them (by saying: ‘Peace be with you’ [Jn. 20:21]) and then empowered them with the ministry of forgiveness: ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. **For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven**’ (Jn. 20:22-23). This forgiveness flows from God’s great mercy to mankind, which in turn flows from God’s love: ‘God **loved** us with so much **love** that he was generous with his **mercy**’ (Eph. 2:4).

The following story may help to illustrate the great love and mercy of God. A couple had a son, to whom they gave the best of opportunities, as well as spiritual, moral and financial supports. But to their disappointment he became a failure due to truancy and drug addiction. As a result, even in their 70s the couple had to take care of their 50-year old son who was jobless, lacked a stable mind, and was often abusive to them.

Similarly, God out of His great love invested generously in us by creating us in His image and likeness and entrusting the whole of creation to us. Yet (in Adam and Eve) we sinned against him. Secondly, like the elderly couple who did not abandon their wayward son, God has not abandoned us. Rather out of His great love for us, He sacrificed His Son so that we might experience how generous is His mercy towards us! Because of this unique sacrifice, God overlooks the punishment we deserve due to sin.

Beloved it might be frightening to think of the fact that God knows every sin we commit in thought or by word or by deed or by omission. On the other hand it is more than refreshing to know that, because of divine mercy, God overlooks the punishment due to our many sins. If God were do deal with us by only His justice, none of us would have probably survived the punishment due to a single slight sin. There are, at least, two reasons why our so-called ‘slight sin’ against God deserves a great punishment. First, it is due to the fact that God is infinitely superior to us. For instance, an assault on the president of a nation may carry a severer punishment than an assault on a labourer. Second, it is because God has endowed us more than the rest of creation [created in His image and likeness as good persons and entrusted with the care of the rest of Hisgood creation]. For instance, an assault on the president by a minister of state may be considered as more serious than an assault by a simple village farmer.

So beloved, if our so-called ‘slight sin’ deserves a severe punishment, and we commit several of them in a day, we can appreciate the mercy of God which overlooks not only our ‘slight sins’ but our ‘serious sins’ as well and allows us to live on for 40, 50, 60 … 100 years, enjoying His rainfall and sunshine for saints and sinners alike(*cf*. Mt. 5:45).

What is more? God is not only overlooking the punishment we deserve, He is eager to forgive us our sins. That is, in view of the blood shed on Calvary, God wants to wipe away our sins as if we never sinned. Beloved let us therefore acknowledge God’s great mercy by:

* Expressing true contrition for our sins;
* Confessing our sins;
* Making use of His graces to overcome further sins in our lives.

Finally, may the divine assistance remain with us, and may the ***overwhelming* divine mercy** soften our hearts towards those who trespass against us, amen!