

This Second Sunday of Easter has not just one title, and most Sundays do. It has three or four that I can think of. It is also called Low Sunday, or the Octave Day of Easter – Easter is such a wonderful feast - the blessings, graces and gifts of the resurrection just cannot be contained in one 24 hour celebration, but they overflow into eight Easter days; and the church all over the world has been celebrating them every day this past week, as if it were one great big Easter Sunday, with stories of the Resurrection, prayers, Glorias and many alleluias. And today is the eighth day, the Octave day, and we mark this day with yet another very profound celebration, the Feast of Divine Mercy. On this feast, we reflect that God's mercy is so wonderful that it is completely overwhelming – it means that all

our sins are like tiny grains of sand that are drowned in the great ocean of God's mercy.

This feast of the Divine Mercy was instituted by Pope St John Paul II a few years before he died – as a young man Karol Wojtyla had a devotion to Sr Faustina, a nun at the convent in Krakow in Poland, who died in 1938. He canonised her in April 2000, and she is known as the Apostle of the Divine Mercy. Why? Because of the visions she had of Jesus, and the most famous one in which she pictures Jesus' heart radiating his divine mercy to the world. From his heart came rays of light, red and white, which remind us of the water and blood which flowed from his side as he hung upon the cross – the water of baptism, and the blood of the Eucharist, by which we are saved and made

holy – we are washed in the water of baptism, and we drink the blood of Christ, poured out for us. Now there are people all over the world, including a group in our parish, praying the divine mercy chaplet, using the beads of the rosary, but with two different prayers “Eternal Father, I offer you the body and blood, soul and divinity of your dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for my sins, and those of the whole world.” and the other prayer – “For the sake of his sorrowful passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.”

How much the world needs this mercy; which is why we have a Sunday dedicated to proclaiming the Divine Mercy, and not just any Sunday, but this great Octave day of the resurrection; in the gospel we see how the

mercy of the risen Lord Jesus Christ is offered to the world, through the apostles, who are given the power to forgive sins; and in the psalm, we have the refrain, for his mercy endures for ever (in our translation it is “for his love has no end, but it means the same thing). In Latin it is Misericordia – which means a suffering from the heart, God, in his merciful heart suffers with us, in compassion, and in love. A deep, loving identification with people in all that they are going through, that is what mercy is; and it is an attribute of God – this is Divine Mercy. This is what St Faustina saw in her vision, pouring forth from the heart of Jesus; and what was her response, and our response? It is there on the image “Jesus, I trust in you.”