**Divine Mercy Sunday 2019**

Acts 5: 12-16; Rev 1: 9-11a, 12-13, 17-19; John 20: 19-31

I have been asking myself in recent weeks the question, “What is the heart of a parish?” I not only have asked myself, but I have asked parishioners of all ages, and have received various responses. So I ask all of you, “What is the heart of this parish?”

I believe it is the merciful heart of Jesus beating in the Eucharist. It is the Mass at which we witness all that Jesus has done for us in his life, death, and resurrection. The heart of any parish is the resurrected Jesus given to us in the Eucharist. The merciful heart of Jesus beats and gives us life. Jesus is alive! He has risen. Jesus lives! He has a merciful heart, a living heart, a forgiving heart, and he pours out his mercy into our hearts at each Mass.

The merciful Eucharistic heart of Jesus beats in our midst, among us, within us, and especially at Mass. We must be connected to this mercy. We must not stay away. We must come to the mercy of God. That is one reason why God has commanded us to keep holy the Sabbath and why we are obliged to come to Mass every Sunday and Holy Day. We need his mercy, and we need to praise and thank him for it.

You too are the heart of this parish if you have a merciful heart. I can say that to the extent that you soak in God’s mercy at the Eucharist and then extend it to each other, you too are the heart of this parish. Your heart must also be open to God’s mercy, and then beat with mercy for others.

Yes, we are called to be merciful. We are called to be like Jesus. We must be merciful to others. We must accept God’s mercy into our own lives in order to show it to others.

Do we accept God’s mercy? Do we allow the merciful heart of Jesus to permeate our lives? Will your heart beat like the heart of Jesus for our husbands, our wives, our children, our parents, our neighbors, our parishioners, yes even to our enemies? Will you be merciful even to those who do not deserve it? If we are to be able to do this, we must be connected to Divine Mercy. Mercy and forgiveness are at the center of what it means to follow Christ. The heart of the moral life is mercy. Mercy trumps justice, for in God’s eyes, they are the same.

Jesus had mercy on the repentant thief. Will we? Jesus told the adulteress, “I do not condemn you, but go and sin no more.”Do we have the same attitude with those who have betrayed our trust? When Peter denied Jesus three times, Jesus didn’t asked, “Why did you do that?” but he asked, “Do you love me?” How are we when someone denies our friendship?

Will we have mercy on the man on death row, or will we exact vengeance? Will we wage war or pursue peace? Will we love those who hate us, or hate in return?

As St. Faustina taught us, to be merciful to those most difficult to forgive, those most difficult to love, we must have a deep faith and trust in Jesus’ mercy for us. When we find it difficult to show mercy, we must say, “Jesus, I trust in you! Help me to show mercy to this person.”

Jesus, we trust in you! You are the way. Make ours heart like unto yours.