

# The Divine Mercy offers forgiveness and reparation!

This is a **very busy season** for our **Bishop** ... as he travels to all the Parishes of the Diocese to bestow the **Sacrament of Confirmation** on our children, **8<sup>th</sup> grade** and up. He will visit **2 or 3 or 4 parishes** each week to cover **our 50 Parishes!**

Now it's customary for **Bishop Baker** to ask the **those being confirmed** a number of **questions** beforehand to assure him that they have been properly instructed in **the faith**.

He'll ask them to recite 7 Fundamental Catholic Prayers: **Apostles Creed, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be, Act of Contrition, Morning Offering and Guardian Angel Prayer.**

He'll ask them to recite **the 10 Commandments**, the **7 Sacraments**, the **7 Gifts** and the **12 Fruits** of the Holy Spirit, the **graces of Confirmation**, the definition of a **Sacrament** and the definition of **Indulgence**.

Those are **some of the things our Children** are expected to know ... and if they don't know them ... **then perhaps they're not ready for the Gift of Confirmation.**

So tell me ... **how would you do** in answering those questions?

**Do you know** the **10 Commandments** ... the **Gifts and Fruits** of the Holy Spirit ... the definition of a **Sacrament** and the definition of an **Indulgence**?

If not, I hope you'll go home today and look them up in your **Bible** or your **Catechism**.

**Everyone** needs to know **these important parts** of our **Catholic Faith**.

One of them in particular applies to our Feast today ... the **Feast of Divine Mercy**.

**What is an indulgence?**

Listen to the definition given in our **Catechism**:

*"An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven ... which the Christian ... gains ... through the action of the Church ... which dispenses ... with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the Saints."*

Wow! That **quite a definition** ... it sounds pretty involved ... and **it is**.

So, let's break it down to **4 elements**.

**Remission ... Punishment ... Church ... Treasury**

**The key word the Bishop is looking for is “remission” ...**

**remission means *removal* or *relief from* ...**

**from what ... from “temporal punishment”**

which is **the punishment** we are due to experience...

**in this life and in the life to come ...**

for **all the mortal and venial sins** that we’ve committed that **God** has forgiven.

**Yes, recovery from sin is two-fold ... it involves forgiveness and reparation.**

**Jesus’ Mercy imparts forgiveness ... Jesus’ Justice imparts punishment.**

**It’s like accidentally backing into another Parishioner’s car in the Parking Lot.**

**The Parishioner may well forgive you for crushing his fender ...**

**But you’ve created damage and the expectation is that you will fix the damage.**

**In the same way reparation is required for the damage we create by our sins.**

**But, Jesus, in His goodness, has given Authority to His Church ... to dispense supernatural relief ... to repair the damage we’ve created by our sins ...**

**Recall how Jesus says to the Lead Apostle, Peter, in Matthew 16:**

*“Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”*

**Here, Jesus gave authority to Peter to dispense God’s justice ... to bind and loose ... on earth.**

And **the relief or remission from punishment for sin ...**

**that the Church has the authority to dispense ...**

**comes from the great Treasury of Graces**

**made available by the Lord in His work of Redemption.**

**This relief from punishment for sin can be either partial or complete ...**

**and it’s referred to as either a **partial** or **plenary indulgence.****

**So, what is an indulgence?**

**Think of: Remission ... Punishment ... Church ... Treasury**

**It’s a removal of the punishment due to sin ...**

**that is afforded by the Church ... from the Treasury of God’s graces.**

And **the reason** that this is **especially important** today is because:

**The Church** has attached a **Plenary Indulgence** ...

to worthily worshipping Jesus ... under **the title of Divine Mercy**  
on this **the Sunday after Easter** ... **Divine Mercy Sunday!**

**Fifteen years** ago, in the **Jubilee Year of 2000**, **Pope Saint John Paul The Great**  
declared that the **2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday** of Easter would henceforth be celebrated as  
**Divine Mercy Sunday** throughout the **Universal Church**.

And as the **Vicar of Christ's Church**, the **Pope** declared that all **Catholics**,  
who worthily prepare themselves and participate in this devotion ...  
will receive a plenary indulgence ...  
which is the removal of all punishment for their sins!

**Think about that!**      **The full remission of punishment** means that a soul would  
be spared any time of purification in **Purgatory** and go straight to Heaven.

**Can we even begin** to comprehend **how incredible** this offer is?

**While we know** that we always receive **Jesus' forgiveness** for sins in **Confession**.

**Jesus** goes beyond that here by offering the **complete remission** of **all the penance**  
we would have had to offer to repair the wounds of those sins.

**He offers us a plenary or full indulgence** ...

which **means** that **all damage** we've done for our whole life would be repaired!

**We're used to receiving a Penance** each time we go to **Confession** ...

**That's the action we do** to demonstrate our desire to repair the wounds of sin.

**But it brings** only a partial indulgence or a **partial remission** from **punishment**.

**A Plenary Indulgence** brings a **complete remission** from **punishment!**

**So how do we partake of this great gift** from **Jesus** through His Church?

We complete the following steps:

(and no serious sin since then!)

- Go to **Confession** on Divine Mercy Sunday or since Tues of Holy Week ↑
- Attend **Mass** on Divine Mercy Sunday and receive **Holy Communion**
- Pray for the **intentions of the Pope** (included in our **Prayer of the Faithful**)
- Spend time in **devotion** to the **Divine Mercy image** (venerate after Mass)
- Have **complete detachment** from sin.

**What a magnificent demonstration of Jesus' infinite love for us ...**  
that after granting us forgiveness ... He absorbs our penance!

**How much mercy does Jesus have to bestow? A limitless ocean of Mercy!**

**That's what we celebrate on **Divine Mercy Sunday!****

We reverenced this in our **Responsorial Psalm** today as **our Cantor sang:**

*“Let the house of Israel say, His mercy endures forever.”*

*“Let the house of Aaron say, His mercy endures forever.”*

*“Let those who fear the Lord say, His mercy endures forever.”*

**How blessed we are to have access to God's limitless mercy.**

**God knows we need it!**

**He knows that given our **human weakness** and the **many temptations** of the devil,  
we often fall into sin ... and weaken or break our relationship with Him.**

**Jesus knew this would happen ... **which is why** He left **His Apostles** ...  
the **first Bishops** of His Church ... with **the power** to forgive sins!**

In our **Gospel** today, **Jesus** comes to **His Apostles** gathered in the Upper Room right  
after His Resurrection and He breathes on them and says, “*Receive the Holy Spirit,  
whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.*”

So, **Jesus** left us access to His Mercy through the Ministers of His Church, the **Priests**.

What a **Great God** we have ... He gives us everything:

- Through His Passion, **Jesus** accomplished **Redemption**.
- In His great love, **Jesus** gives us Himself in the **Holy Eucharist**, and
- in His great compassion, **Jesus** forgives our sins with His **Divine Mercy**.

**Pope Francis** wants **everyone** to participate in the vastness of **God's Mercy**, which  
is why one month ago, on the **2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary** of his **Pontificate**, he announced an  
extraordinary Jubilee, a **Holy Year of Mercy**, that will begin this **December 8<sup>th</sup>** of  
2015 and run through the **Feast of Christ the King, Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016!**

He's calling the whole world to rediscover the **Joy of God's Mercy!**  
**How good** to be forgiven ... **we all have need of** **God's Mercy**.

Let's carry the joy of **Easter** and the joy of **Divine Mercy** out to **the whole world**.