

Divine Mercy BZ1

We are in the second week of celebrating Easter Joy.

But I wonder about the many struck by the physical and economical trials of the covid virus if they are joyfull?

We know that suffering is a part of life and central to our Faith, as well.

As St. Peter reminds us, *“In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”*

Sufferings, then, aren't simply to be tolerated through gritted teeth; they are an opportunity to grow in love and to praise God,

an opportunity we don't want to miss as we continue to process these difficult days.

Yes, these days have led to a host of changes to our everyday lives.

We may be getting overweight and in need of a haircut, but the emergence of these disruptions to our everyday life,

things we usually fret over and spend so much time and money trying to control,

helps us realize that we are *not* really in control.

In fact, we never were.

And the acceptance of the current state of our physical appearance helps us focus on what really matters: Christ, our light in the darkness.

He doesn't care about our haircut or if we are overweight.

It's not that we are not called to take care of our bodies, we are,

but what Jesus asks from us most of all is to accept His love and to share it.

He asks us to trust in Him.

That call to trust is brought into sharp focus today, Divine Mercy Sunday.

On the one hand, the timing of this feast is odd.

On the first Sunday after Easter, a time when we are still in the early joys of the feast day,

we are suddenly called to pray, "*For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.*"

We're tempted to say, "*We've been sorrowful for a while, now let's celebrate.*"

But this day isn't separate from Christ's glorious Resurrection. The Paschal Mystery is Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection and we cannot have the Resurrection without his Passion first.

It's why we have crucifixes up in our churches and not empty crosses; we look at the totality of Jesus' love for us, and that's both suffering and rising from the dead.

We celebrate this great love today as the memorial acclamation reminds us, "*We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.*"

Divine Mercy, then, is fitting during Easter, and particularly so, for it recalls the depths of God's love

and how his forgiveness is offered freely and generously even to this day.

And so, while the world tells us that we are restricted when we follow Jesus, we know that to say yes to His love,

a love which has given everything for us and is in control of this chaotic world, is not a burden, but a joy.

Saint Faustina asked Jesus one day for a big favor.

She asked if He would save everyone who was going to die that day, regardless of whether or not they had lived a good life.

Jesus told her this was a very great thing to ask.

She replied that she knew that, but that she also knew that He loved giving big gifts more than small ones.

Our Lord replied that he would do as she asked, for she loved Him dearly,

and He did indeed enjoy giving great things more than small ones.

This pandemic is sharply revealing our powerlessness. That's why we cry out today, Jesus I trust in You.

Because He is not without power, rather He is Goodness itself and can draw good even out of this present evil.

So, let us bring our little struggles to Jesus and let us bring the big stuff, too.

He knows the struggles and pains of this world; He knows what it is to suffer.

But now, with Christ's resurrection, suffering has a redemptive value.

Now, the sufferings we endure, large or small, can be united to Jesus' suffering on the Cross, the act that saved the world.

And so, whether we are worrying about our appearance, our health, or our livelihood, we can enter into the struggle,

knowing that Christ is with us, will help us walk this path, and takes pleasure in bestowing great gifts upon us.

Because there *can* be good that comes out of these days .

What a shame it would be if, when this is all over, we emerged from our homes exactly the same as we had been.

And so let us continue to keep each other in prayer and let us do so by praying with words

“Lord and Savior, You have told us that we too must accept crucifixion if we are to accept resurrection with You.

Help us to rejoice in the sufferings that come with the fulfillment of our daily duties, seeing in them the royal road of the cross to the resurrection.”