

Jesus, the Mercy Seat of God Through Whom All Forgiveness Comes

**Is it possible to truly understand the fathomless love and mercy of our God
without first understanding His perfect justice?**

Let us recall how, with the sin of Adam, father of the human race, the consequent curse of death fell upon all of us, bringing with it a vast distance and alienation from the God Who had made us to be happy with Him forever. No longer could we walk with God amidst the beauty of the enclosed garden of His paradise, nor keep company with our Beloved Who had brought us forth out of the depth of His own Heart. Not one of us (save Mary) has escaped the condemnation which Perfect Justice totaled as the price of sin. No mere creature could ever bridge the abyss that sin erupted between the creature and the Creator. Sin against an infinite God demands propitiation from an infinite person in return to balance the heavy scale of divine justice, as perfect in God as is His mercy.

But this God, so in love with the creatures born out of His Love, designed a way to remain with them, though at a distance, veiled in a cloud or hidden in a pillar of fire. He gathered His prodigal ones and bid them build a Tabernacle, a meeting tent, to carry with them as they wandered through the desert of their now barren lives, while He weaned them of their pagan diet and nourished them with the milk and honey of Divine Providence. In this Tabernacle was the Holy of Holies that housed the Ark of the Covenant in which their sacred signs of His Presence were kept. There, on top of the Ark He had them carve a lid of gold bearing two cherubim facing each other. That space between them and above those sacred signs became His meeting place with His people, that Mercy Seat from which He spoke to them and commanded them forward in His ways. Oh how they longed for that day of perfect atonement when the cloud would be lifted and the fire would burn more inside their hearts at His Word than in the dark of their night. How they longed to see His Face! How they longed for that First Love! Is there any love like First Love, original innocence?

“Felix culpa!” “Happy fault!” that won for us so great a Redeemer! Thus our Liturgy chants God’s praise, for He so loved the world He sent His dearly Beloved Son into it to be Himself the propitiation for our sins, the perfect sacrifice, the perfect atonement to satisfy the debt of divine justice and to restore us to God’s favor. But this was a sacrifice to end all sacrifice, not merely to pay our debt and reconcile us to our God, but one so magnanimous as to bestow on us sonship into the very family of God, and with it, inheritance into His glory and all that belongs to Him. No longer do we merely walk in God’s Presence but He quite truly comes to live within us so we may even more truly live in Him.

Can we fathom what kind of Love could fashion so grand a plan of redemption for us? Can we imagine a Father condemning His only Son to the most vile and shameful death upon a cross by the very creatures whom He had made? What kind of love for His creatures would prompt a Father to allow the very rage of hell and every despicable sin committed from the beginning of time to the end of it to be laid upon the Body of His dear Son to tear away at His sacred flesh and drain away His precious life until not one drop of blood remained in Him? Can we poor creatures ever understand the kind of filial love that moved that Son to kiss that ugly cross and willingly be nailed to it as His Father willed? Who can imagine such love that forgave the wretched ones who crucified their Holy God? And to forgive all of us, for we, too, were there, crucifying Him with our sins!

St. Faustina's Diary, **DIVINE MERCY IN MY SOUL**, is pages upon pages long extolling the incomprehensible mercy of our God Who aches to wash us clean of sin and all its concupiscence and to fill our souls with His pure Love. **The greater our misery, the greater our right to God's mercy Jesus says.** Why? Because He has already perfectly satisfied the demand of divine justice for all sin and opened for us the gate of Heaven's boundless mercy to flood into our souls! Flood into our souls if they are open to receive it. It was for us poor sinners that He came to die and He desires that not one of us should be lost to Him.

But--another Diary contemporary to **DIVINE MERCY IN MY SOUL**, that of **OUR LADY OF AMERICA**© written by Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, is far more brief and written in strikingly clear and simple language that warns us that the boundless mercy of God is in great tension today with His perfect justice over the enormity of this evil generation's sins and rejection of grace that cries out for judgment and correction. Jesus Who suffered so much for us and in our place, comes as a Beggar, (a Beggar!) looking for our love and we give Him only the crumbs, crumbs of our affection and token obedience to the Father's will and ways that safeguard our salvation. Jesus sends us His own Mother, hoping that a Mother's heart might win a plea for our repentance and reform of life. Over and over Jesus and Mary both lament our refusal of this time of mercy and of grace. Over and over they beg us to come to them to learn great purity of heart, true repentance and reform of life. One must wonder! Can mercy last forever? **We have fallen to new depths of sin and alienation from the very One Who alone can save us, but Who cannot do so against our will.** Free will is a wondrous and a terrible thing! Though divine justice was satisfied once and for all in Jesus' sacrifice, each generation and each person must personally claim that justification by accepting the grace of redemption Jesus has won for us, choosing to do the Father's will and to live in God's Holy Spirit of Truth and Love. Saints privileged to have visions of our dear Lord's Passion tell us His greatest agony was to see so many souls lost, especially souls of the chosen ones, in spite of the terrible sufferings He endured for us. Let us meditate a while on Jesus' own words!

I am a Beggar for love, but how few give to Me the means by which to satisfy My divine hunger. I hunger for the love of My own, and I receive only the crumbs no other would accept.

My Father is angry. If My children will not listen to My Heart, which is a Voice of mercy and instruction, punishment will come swiftly and no one shall be able to stay it. The pleadings of My Heart have held back the divine justice about to descend on an ungrateful and sinful generation.

My Heart beats with compassion for the sorrows of man. Oh, how gladly would I help him bear the weight of his terrible cross, fashioned, for the most part, by his own guilt! But alas, he will have none of My help. So I am forced to stand by the side of the road and watch him struggle hopelessly in his agony....My Heart grieves over My children in the world. Their hearts are being drawn farther and farther away from Me. They will not even listen to My Mother, because they have never been taught to listen.

Return, My people, for My Heart hungers and thirsts for your love. If you will not return, the just anger of My Father will descend upon you. What would you—My love or My Father's anger? Choose, and as you choose, so shall it be done. I will not force your free will, for that is yours to use as you desire.

O man, what have I done to you that you should refuse My aid?...The Voice of My Heart is the Voice of Mercy. If man will not listen, there is no more I can do, for he ties My hands....My little white dove, if the world is dying, it is because it will not let Me give it life. I am the resurrection and the life, and unless souls seek their life in Me, they will find only death and destruction.

My little white dove, do you know what I find most lacking in the world today? It is FAITH. There are so few souls that believe in Me and My love. They profess their belief and their love, but they do not live this belief. Their hearts are cold, for without faith there can be no love.

(Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA©, pgs. 4-7)

Let us go now to the foot of Jesus' cross on Calvary and gaze upon that Divine Humanity hanging there for our salvation. Various scientists have studied the engineering of a crucifixion; some tell us a piece of wood was nailed to the cross to form a kind of seat upon which Jesus' Sacred Body would have rested to bear His weight lest that weight tear His Body free from the cross where the nails were driven through His wrists. O here is the true Mercy Seat of God, price of our salvation! Here hangs the New Adam who brings new life to all God's children. The Mercy Seat in the Hebrew Holy of Holies is a mere shadow pointing to this place and this seat on the Tree of Life on Calvary's hill that reaches from the roots of earth into the very endless sky of heaven. Dare we gather here and make every day a Mercy Sunday as we let that Precious Saving Blood fall upon us? Then let us call that Precious Blood and mercy down upon our children, too, upon our Church and on all the world. Mercy cannot be given and received unless we recognize our need of it, and ask for it, and then share it with others. Like Dismas, that Good Thief hanging close to Jesus' side, may we, too, recognize our sins in His sight (for He knows them all), own and confess them, then loudly proclaim Jesus the Christ is our Saving Lord. Then shall we pray for and obtain forgiveness and

divine mercy in **our** souls, simply for trusting in it, and asking for it. Amazing grace! The Mercy Seat moves from that cross into our confessional where sinner and Savior now sit together and embrace in peace-filled reconciliation. O Sacrament of Mercy, Sacrament of Reconciliation! May we never fear to meet our saving Lord therein! How well might our dear Sorrowful Mother who stood beneath the Savior's cross on Calvary in such pain, tenderly gaze at each of us, with tears in her eyes and hope in her heart that His Blood be not shed in vain, just as tenderly ask

My child, my dear child, have you accepted my Son Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior yet?

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