

Divine Mercy in the Midst of Exile and Fear

Reading: Revelation 1:9–11a, 12–13, 17–19

Theme: *Divine Mercy is not a feeling—it is Christ standing with us in the fire of our trials.*

◆ The Context: Mercy in Exile

St. John writes from **Patmos**, a barren, rocky island where he was **exiled “because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus”** (Rev 1:9). He is alone, aged, and persecuted. Yet it is precisely there—in exile, isolation, and suffering—that Christ reveals Himself most powerfully.

This is Divine Mercy: **Christ does not wait for our success to appear. He comes in the midst of our fear.**

◆ The Vision: The Son of Man, Yet More Than Man

St. John sees **“one like a son of man”** clothed in priestly robes, standing **“in the midst of the lampstands”** (Rev 1:12–13). The lampstands represent the **Churches** (v. 20), which are often weak, persecuted, or compromising. Yet Christ is not distant. He is **present**, walking **in their midst**.

St. **Irenaeus of Lyons**, writing in the 2nd century, saw this vision as a reminder that **Christ never abandons His Church**, even when She seems most fragile:

“He has promised to be present always with His disciples, walking among them and strengthening them by the Spirit” (Against Heresies, Book IV).

Divine Mercy, then, is not just a private devotion—it is the assurance that Christ **abides with His people**, especially in times of trial.

The Reaction: Fear Met with Mercy

When John sees the glorified Christ, he falls “at His feet as though dead” (v. 17). This is not just awe—it is the fear of a sinful man standing before infinite holiness. But then, **Jesus touches him**, saying:

“Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last... I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and of the netherworld.”

St. **Gregory the Great** notes that Christ **touches John before He speaks** (Homily 1 on the Gospels), teaching us that **mercy is not first an instruction—it is first an embrace**. Christ reassures with presence before He teaches with words.

This is the heart of Divine Mercy: **God is not waiting to condemn us; He is coming to raise us.**

The Message: Write What You See

Jesus commands John:

“Write down, therefore, what you have seen, and what is happening, and what will happen afterwards.” (v. 19)

Divine Mercy is not a secret to be kept—it is a truth to be proclaimed. St. John becomes the first evangelist of Divine Mercy in apocalyptic form: **telling the Church not to fear the darkness, for Christ is alive, victorious, and present.**

St. **Faustina** also received the command from Christ to **“write this down”** (cf. *Diary*, §47, §1142). The Book of Revelation and the *Diary of Divine Mercy* both emerge from profound mystical visions—but also from **suffering, faith, and hope.**

Where Is Divine Mercy Today?

Like St. John, many today feel exiled—emotionally, spiritually, or even physically. Illness, grief, guilt, or spiritual dryness can make God seem distant.

But Divine Mercy is not an emotion. It is the **risen Christ drawing near**, touching us with grace, and saying, *“Do not be afraid.”*

Consider the many in your parish who quietly suffer—single parents, the elderly in care homes, the depressed, the recently divorced, or the addict who fears returning to the confessional. **This reading is Christ’s word to them:** *“I was dead, and now I live. And I hold the keys.”* Not you. Not shame. **He holds the keys.**

Conclusion: Mercy as a Call to Witness

As the Church celebrates Divine Mercy Sunday, we must echo both John and Faustina—not only receiving the mercy of God, but also **writing it with our lives.**

Let us show the world, by how we speak, forgive, and accompany others, that **Divine Mercy is not a painting on a wall** or a prayer we recite once a year. It is **Christ in our midst**, walking among the lampstands, still saying, *“Do not be afraid.”*