

Mission of Divine Mercy



Triduum and Feast of Divine Mercy

Spring 2020



Father blesses the new Crucifix at the Teocalli with the Relic of the True Cross during our November Anniversary celebration.

2020 TRIDUUM SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday - April 5th

11 am Mass - No gathering after Mass

Holy Thursday - April 9th

7:30 pm Mass of the Lord's Supper & Vigil

Good Friday - April 10th

9 am Stations of the Cross

11 am Veneration of the Relic

11 am - 2 pm Confessions

2 pm Service of the Passion

3:30 pm Divine Mercy Chaplet

4:30 pm Mission Closes

Holy Saturday - April 11th

9 am Rosary of Our Lady of Sorrows

9-11 am Confession

10 am Novena of Divine Mercy

12 pm Mission Closes

Easter Sunday - April 12th

6 am Easter Vigil

- - Breakfast - -

11 am Mission Closes

Cover Photo: Relic of the True Cross in the niche behind the altar at the Teocalli, Divine Mercy Sunday 2019.

FREEDOM AND GOD'S PROVIDENCE

by Father John Mary Foster

A Lenten Meditation

KEY QUESTIONS FOR OUR LIFE

Lent is a time especially appropriate and conducive for reflecting on some key questions for our life:

- Is God far away and unknowable? Or is He close to us? Does He speak to us today? Does He interact with our world?
- Are we truly free?
- How does our freedom relate to God's designs?
- What happens when we disobey Him?

The history of Israel sheds light on these questions.

In that history we see our own story, with practical applications at many levels, from the whole Church spread throughout the world, to our families and communities and personal lives.

Let's consider a crucial turning point.

GOD IS CLOSE TO HIS PEOPLE

In a world infected by sin and seemingly far from God's love, God nevertheless had designs of salvation.

God had chosen the people of Israel to be His.

He had set them apart from the other peoples. They were called to be different because they would be led by Him. They would prepare the Savior He would send.

He had raised up Moses to lead them from slavery into a covenant with Him. *"I will be their God and they shall be My people."* He had appointed Joshua to lead them into the Promised Land.

Then came the period of *Judges*. The word "Judges" as we experience and understand it



today, doesn't express well who and what these people were. At this time in Israel, there was no central human authority. Rather, when there was a special need, God would raise up someone that He had chosen to defend and guide and govern the people, like Deborah, Gideon or Samson.

These Judges were not part of a hereditary or elected system. God Himself would choose them. What an advantage to the human systems of choosing a leader!

But it was demanding. This system required the people to make an ongoing act of faith, that God Himself, though invisible, was real and active. And that He loved them and was caring for them. And He would continue to raise up who they needed, when they needed.

And that was critical formation for the people: to learn to trust God and obey Him.

This is a lesson for us today. Our secular society imagines a world where God does not exist or is so far away that we can't know Him.

“God had chosen the people of Israel to be His....They were called to be different because they would be led by Him.”



Scripture shows something very different: God is our Father. He wants to be close to us, caring for us and speaking to us in many ways.

Wouldn't it be helpful to have God guiding us?

He wants to. But how much He can help us depends also on our trust in Him and our listening to Him.

REJECTING GOD AS KING

It's not easy to accept this dependency on God.

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, “Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint for us a king to govern us like all the nations.

... And Samuel prayed to the Lord.

And the Lord said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. According to all the deeds which they have done to Me, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking Me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you.” (1 Sm. 8:4-8)

The Lord says very bluntly what they have done: *“They have rejected Me from being king over them.”* He is revealing the terrible gravity of this act. He Himself wanted to be their King! Instead of the very imperfect and often foolish and evil kings, they could be led by Him. It is true He often acted through human instruments — notably the Judges — but they were instruments or servants of the Divine King, ***who alone had chosen the people and who Himself was caring for them and protecting them.***

Yet they reject Him.

Said clearly, it seems so stupid.

But it is often what we do: preferring our human leaders and perspectives and ideas, to being led by Him.

GOD RESPECTS OUR FREEDOM

“Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them.”

This is amazing. The people are not listening to God. Yet God listens to them.

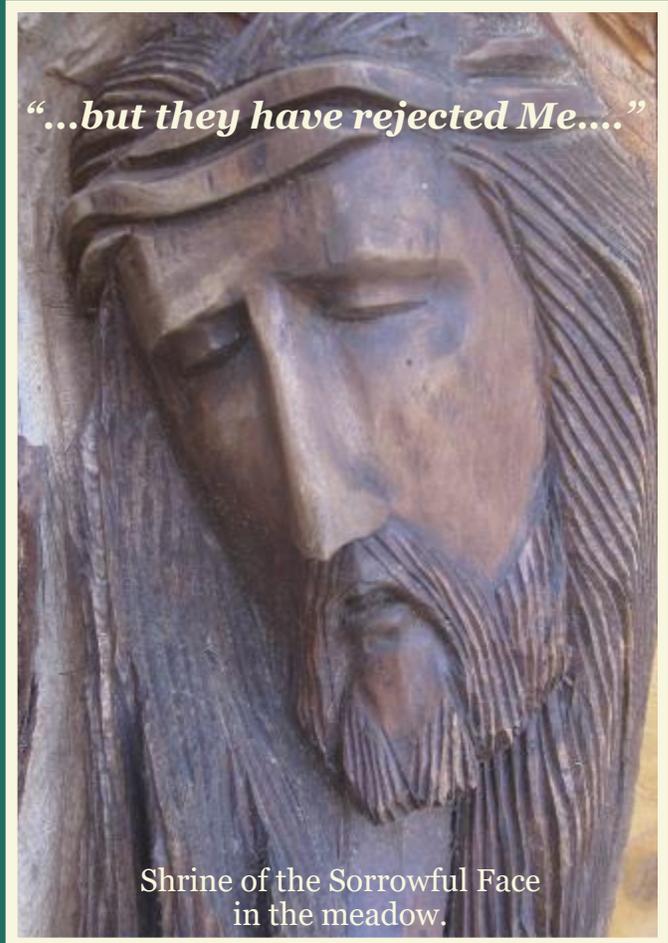
He has given us true freedom. He respects our freedom. Even when what we choose is not what He wants.

But, as a good Father, He clearly warns His people of the consequences of their decision.

“Now then, listen to their voice; only, you shall solemnly warn them, and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.”

So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking a king from him. He said, “These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots; and he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. He will take your menservants and maid-servants, and the best of your cattle and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves.”

And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but the Lord will not answer you in that day.” (1 Sm. 8:9-18)



True freedom means there are real consequences to our decision. Hearing of these consequences should make the people change their decision. But, they, like us often, don't listen.

GOD'S SURPRISING RESPONSE

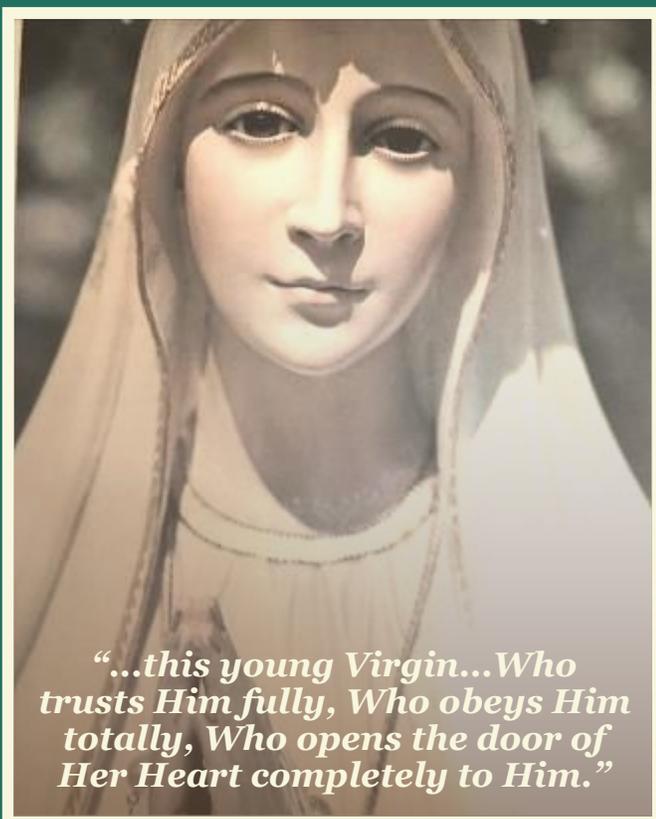
Another surprise:

Most of us in a similar situation, being offended so deeply, would say: “Ok. You rejected my help. Good luck with that!” and would bitterly abandon them.

God, on the contrary, continues to help them. He Himself finds a king for them, Saul, and has him anointed.

Things start off pretty well. But then Saul is unfaithful and things start going south.

God could say: “See. I told you so. Tough for you!”



“...this young Virgin...Who trusts Him fully, Who obeys Him totally, Who opens the door of Her Heart completely to Him.”

But instead He gives them an even better king. The great King David. A man blessed by God with so many gifts and talents, both humanly and spiritually. David has great successes, and Israel grows in power and wealth.

But even the great King David, whose very successes have made him more vulnerable to temptation, sins gravely in adultery and then homicide.

David repents. But the infection of his sin will have very painful consequences.

Yet, even after King David's sin, the Lord continues to try to help His people. David is succeeded by the renowned King Solomon. The Lord gives him an extraordinary wisdom. Under King Solomon, the Kingdom of Israel reaches the peak of its glory.

God, in His mercy, even after His people's rejection, continues to help them. He continues to try to help us, to reach out to us, even when we reject His guidance.

CONSEQUENCES

But the fateful rejection of God's Kingship over them continues to infect the people.

Sin has consequences.

Solomon, in his prosperity, gradually opens the door to idolatry.

Under his arrogant son, the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah separate, never more to be united.

Many kings follow. Some good and faithful. Many mediocre. Many foolish and evil.

The Lord continues to try and help. This is the period of the great prophets that God sends to warn His people.

But they don't listen to the prophets of God.

The sins and consequences accumulate in this sad and very human history. Finally, the Kingdom of Israel is conquered by the Assyrians, with much bloodshed, and many are led into exile and these tribes disappear from history.

The Kingdom of Judah lasts longer, but, finally, it falls to the Babylonians. Jerusalem is invaded. Solomon's magnificent temple is razed. Many of the inhabitants are massacred. Many others are led into exile.

The terrible consequences of not listening to God. Not because God caused the evil. But when we choose evil over trusting in the Lord, we open ourselves to its destruction.

GOD'S DESIGNS ACCOMPLISHED

And yet God still does not abandon His people.

In the bitterness of their exile and humiliation, their pride crushed, they turn back to Him. And He is still waiting for them.

And gradually prepares them for the King that *He* wants to give them.

And finally, there is this young Virgin, Mary of Nazareth, Who trusts God fully,

Who obeys Him totally, Who opens the door of Her Heart completely to Him. And the Father sends us the King of Kings, the Lord of Mercy.

God's designs of salvation are still realized, despite our sinfulness.

DIVINE MERCY

We all have sinned. We have abused our freedom and disobeyed God and caused bad consequences, maybe terrible consequences, for ourselves and for others.

This season of Lent is an opportunity to turn more deeply to the Father. To discover the good news that He is much closer to us than we thought — He is *“Emmanuel, God with us.”* To acknowledge humbly when we haven't listened to Him, when we have ignored or rejected Him in the many ways He speaks to us and reaches out to us.

It is a time to turn back to Him with *“a listening heart.”*

One of the special ways He is speaking to us today is through His revelations of Divine Mercy, given through St. Faustina.

Lent leads us to His sacrifice on the Cross, then His Triumph on Easter.

And then the special feast He has wanted for us, *for our time*: Divine Mercy.

This is a time to turn with trust in His infinite Mercy. His Mercy is infinitely greater than our sins. *“The greater the sinner, the greater his right to God's mercy.”* (#423 *Divine Mercy In My Soul*)



Jesus, we trust in You!



“His Mercy is infinitely greater than our sins.”

A FRIEND'S DREAM

(A friend, who is a husband and father, emailed this recently to Fr. John Mary. We have the sender's permission to share it with you.)

I had a dream last night. I was in the midst of a large crowd of people at a church and I was to be the person that reenacted the passion of Jesus. In my dream, though, I realized I was to actually go through the same sufferings that Jesus went through, and I was terrified. I was weeping and sobbing and thinking to myself, "I can't do this, I can't do this." I kept looking at my hands and considering the nails they were going to put through them, and I could not bear it. I also began considering the humiliation of being put up on the cross and being hoisted up in the air for everyone to see in my bloodied and beaten condition – and I couldn't bear the thought of it. I kept thinking, 'how can I get out of this – maybe I could run?' The crowd seemed to be very ready to get started and I knew the time was short. I felt overwhelming fear and dread at what was about to happen to me. I then woke up. I was so relieved it was just a dream. But I realized that if I had actually been put in that place to suffer for humanity, I would have tried to escape. I never ran away in my dream but I am certain that would have been the outcome. Had it been up to me, humanity would have perished in their sin with no hope of ever being reunited with God.

It makes me realize on a whole other level what the Garden of Gethsemane must have been like. The range of horrible emotions Jesus must have felt while he prayed to the Father saying that (paraphrasing) if there was any way this cup could pass from Him – but that nevertheless "not My will, but Thy will be done."

My dream in no way revealed the complete horrific suffering our Lord went through. It just revealed a tiny aspect of His passion and just this tiny realization was absolutely overwhelming.

The horror of what our Lord went through is beyond anything we can imagine. His passion is completely beyond our comprehension of human suffering.

The trials and sufferings we face, in this short

time we have in this life, are nothing compared to the suffering of our Lord's passion. I don't think we will ever know the full scope of Jesus' suffering, this side of heaven. He suffered emotionally, spiritually, mentally, physically, in ways and to an extent beyond our human ability to comprehend.

Jesus, thank You for Your Sacrifice! I love You, I praise You, and I worship You! ♦



LEAD TIME . . .

by Mother Magdalene



As human beings we anticipate and prepare for events that are important to us.

How important is it then to be alerted to, and to begin to prepare for, **the coming of the Feast of Divine Mercy?**!

Throughout the *Millenia of Grace* that Jesus has poured out upon His suffering children ever since the Consummation of His Sacrifice it would seem that there was still a Grace withheld (I speak metaphorically); a mystical Golden Reliquary that remained sealed.*

What was this Grace? And for whom was it being held? It was the Revelation of Divine Mercy as given to Saint Faustina, and it was held in reserve for us!

The Grace: An unprecedented Ocean of Mercy and Forgiveness, absolving one not only of sin but also of the punishment due to sin.

For us: For His Children in this era of anguish, so wounded and damaged by sin; so awash in an exponentially increasing wave of evil that it seems we are cut down before we have even made it to the shore.

How then to prepare?

1) **First, recognize, realize, and remember this incomparable Event**, marking it prominently on one's calendar: Sunday, April 19th, 2020. Not to be missed if within our power.

2) **Look forward to this Feast with faith and trust; and prepare one's soul in keeping with the Lord's Promise:**

“On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the Fount of My Mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day all the divine floodgates through which graces flow are opened.” (Divine Mercy in My Soul #699)**

How to live out the Promise?

1) **Depart with the slate wiped clean; the playing field levelled; the soul at peace in its newfound innocence.**

2) **Begin the next day of the rest of your life with a renewed hope and strength; with a restored and loving relationship to Our Father of Mercies Who is never without Compassion and Rescue for His Little Ones, no matter how broken and lost we may be.** ♦

** This phrase is not to be taken as a theological statement with regard to the economy of salvation, but rather as a poetic expression of the Grace-filled Surprise of the Revelation of Divine Mercy.*

*** For more information on this Promise and the plenary indulgence for Divine Mercy Sunday with regard to Confession, please see Divine Mercy Sunday on our website: www.missionofdivinemeracy.org*

A THANK YOU TO OUR ALTAR SERVERS

from Emily Jebbia



Palm Sunday, 2019

As a member of the Mission choir, I have participated in a lot of MDM Masses. And I have come to have a great appreciation for how much well-trained altar servers add to the reverent celebration of the Mass.

Let me say first that most of the time I don't really notice our altar servers. They are there, and carry out their duties and I don't pay much attention.

But a couple of years ago, at an evening Mass on Holy Thursday, I looked up in our darkened Chapel during the Eucharistic prayer to see about ten servers kneeling in two rows before the Altar. Most held a candle. And I was struck by the simple beauty of what I was seeing. But more than the visual beauty, it was their presence and solemnity gathered there in front of the altar that would tell any stranger walking into this service that something solemn and important and even transcendent was taking place.

One reason for my appreciation of our servers is that they stand in contrast to so much of my previous experience. I'm thinking specifically of my home parish when I was a teenager.

Our pastor was a good and kindly priest, at that time probably in his early 80's, solely in charge of a large parish. Now I think back on him in gratitude for his long life of service. At the time, however, I just thought he was awfully old and that his sermons were less than captivating. I have distinct memories of Holy Week services where he was having to push and pull the altar servers and give them lots of whispered directions because they were clearly clueless about what they were supposed to do. Of course, now I realize that training the altar servers was just one of a long list of duties for our elderly and over-worked pastor. But at the time my reaction was different. While the servers' cluelessness sort of amused me, it also made me feel like there was little invested in this service and made me question my own investing of time there.

In the years since then, I have been to many Masses in many churches. It seems it is always the Masses where the altar servers don't seem to know what they are doing, or where they sit with bored, distracted looks that catch my attention and stick in my memory. When they do their job with competency, I rarely notice.



But lately, witnessing the altar servers that I see each week at the Mission, I have been giving more thought to what they add to the Mass. Something beyond competency. And I feel certain that I am not alone. Everyone in the church must surely be influenced at some level by the apparent reverence with which they serve.

Our servers range in age from six-year-old boys to men in their sixties, with a fair number of young men in their teens. When not serving at the Altar, their behavior may run the gamut of all boys and men. But when they are serving, their demeanor, and even grace, as they move about the Sanctuary and perform their assigned duties, impresses.

When I mentioned that I wanted to write this article, Br. Mikael objected, saying, “Don’t try to give people the impression that we’re perfect. We usually don’t have enough time to practice, and we make all kinds of mistakes up there. You just don’t notice.” I responded, “You are right. I don’t notice! And probably most of the rest of the congregation doesn’t either.”

But my point is not that they don’t make mistakes and missteps, but that I appreciate how their *efforts to serve well* adds to the spirit of reverence at Mass.

The servers must be taught to move with deliberation, instead of sudden rapid moves which is the norm for young and teenage boys. One time I noticed one of the younger servers unobtrusively leave his seat in the middle of Mass and return ten minutes later. As I later learned, he had felt sick, had gone outside and lost his breakfast. But you would never have known what the young man was going through. That’s good training!

Again, I am not trying to claim perfection, or that “our servers are better than your servers.” What I am trying to say is that well-trained servers make a difference at Mass. They help to convey and inspire a sense of reverence for what is taking place.

And there are moments when I am particularly struck by what they inspire, such as when they gathered in front of the Altar during the Eucharistic prayer, candles in their hands. We are told that myriads of Angels gather around the Altar at every Mass, but we just



can't see them. For me these acolytes were at that moment almost Angels made visible. Not that *they* are angels — I'm not saying that — but their *visible* presence helped to remind me of what is *invisible*.

I mentioned that I belong to the choir at the Mission. I have also belonged to choirs in two previous parishes. They were both good experiences and led by good, musically talented choir directors. But in neither of my previous experiences was I made so conscious of the importance of praying before singing. Never did we pray at each practice session or before singing for each Mass, as we do here. I think those prayers are somehow reflected in our

singing; reminding us that we are not “performing” but trying to “do something beautiful for God.”

So it is with the altar servers. What most people in the Chapel never see is that before beginning the procession along the outside of our Chapel, Father prays with and over all of the servers and acolytes. And I feel sure that he is asking God for more than that nobody trips on their albs.

So thank you altar servers for your service! For all who attend, you help to make our Mass a more reverent experience. ♦

TRIDUUM RETREAT 2020

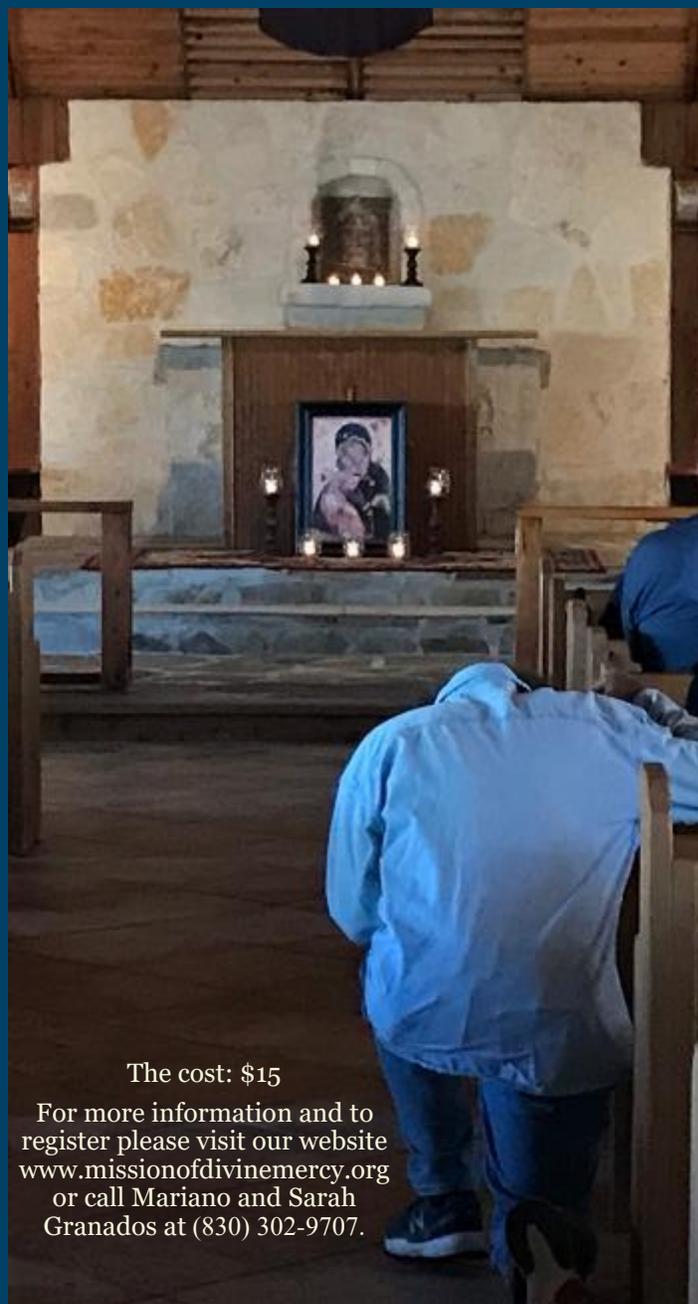
This is a very simple retreat that begins the evening of Holy Thursday and concludes Easter Sunday morning. There are no talks. There is a simple orientation on Thursday evening, and the retreat concludes with breakfast on Easter Sunday.

The retreat consists in each individual living with us the liturgical services of these days (see the Holy Week Schedule on page 2), which are also open to the public. We encourage retreatants to spend the rest of the time in silence, taking full advantage of the Mission grounds and meditating on the mysteries of these hours with the help of the Holy Scriptures, the *Diary of St. Faustina*, and *The Gospel as Revealed to Me* by Maria Valtorta. (For more information on this please see our website.)

Retreatants are free to come and go as they wish within the indicated hours. But we encourage them to live the retreat in its entirety as much as possible, so as to accompany our Lord during His Passion, Crucifixion and Resurrection. During certain hours the Mission will be open only for retreatants.

The only meals included in the retreat are a dinner on Holy Thursday and a public breakfast on Easter Sunday morning. For all other meals retreatants are welcome to bring their own food or go to local restaurants. Snacks and beverages will be made available to retreatants throughout the retreat.

Unfortunately, we cannot offer lodging. In the past, people coming from far away have stayed at local hotels. ♦



The cost: \$15

For more information and to register please visit our website www.missionofdivinemeracy.org or call Mariano and Sarah Granados at (830) 302-9707.



FEAST OF DIVINE MERCY SCHEDULE

Please note the changes in our 2020 schedule, and that we are unable to offer confessions on Divine Mercy Sunday.

Saturday - April 18th

5-7 pm Holy Hour &
Meditative Chaplet

St. Joseph's Chapel

There will be veneration
of the Divine Mercy image
after Benediction.

Sunday - April 19th *

8:30 am Mission Opens
9-9:45 am Chaplet and Veneration
10 am Mass
2 pm Mission Closes

* All activities will be held outside
at the Teocalli and veneration of the Divine
Mercy image will continue after Mass.

Parishes throughout the Archdiocese will be celebrating the Feast of Divine Mercy on Sunday, April 19th. We urge you not to miss this unprecedented opportunity of Grace.

FROM PETER'S CHAIR...

One Milestone and Two Monasteries



Their current houses were purchased because they brought the Community out to the Mission, provided immediate living space, and protected the integrity of the original property from noisy neighbors and property developers. But they were a temporary fix because the houses don't really work for the needs of the religious life. It's like trying to make a convenience store work as a fire station: the needs are different.

The property where the women live is the one piece that doesn't actually adjoin the Mission. We would like to sell it and use the proceeds to help finance the construction of the monasteries. But we can't really sell it until the women have a place to live.

So God willing, we hope this year to begin the project for two monasteries: one for the women and one for the men with a shared chapel. This will be a big undertaking for us, bigger even than the O'Callaghan Divine Mercy Center. Yes, we are currently a small community, but we believe

As I sit writing this, we are about to mark the one year anniversary of Maria Felicitas' passing into Eternal Life on February 12, 2019. It is hard to believe that it has already been one year. I still remember so clearly our gathering around her body in the early hours of that Tuesday morning and the sense of God's presence as He took this founding member of our little Community to Himself. We sensed it was a mysterious milestone for us.

Then there were the seemingly miraculous series of events and actions that occurred that allowed us to bury her in the new graveyard on Saturday. The graveyard that hadn't existed on Monday.

As we mark Maria's anniversary, we are looking forward to a project that was close to her heart: building monasteries for the Community on Shepherds' Hill, above the meadow. The sign announcing the future site of the monasteries has been there so long that it has just become part of the scenery. But the thought of monasteries is never far from the mind of the Community.





Holy Angels help us!

that God has important plans for the Mission and is asking us to be prepared. I ask you to keep this project in your prayers.

Amazingly, the Mission relies completely upon donations to exist. Though we have the blessings of our Archbishop, we receive no money from the Archdiocese. If you are a regular monthly donor, we especially thank you, as this helps us to budget and plan. If you aren't yet a regular donor, we ask that you

please consider becoming one. You can set up recurring donations on the Mission website or you can call Jackie at the front desk for assistance. Lastly, I ask you to pray about including the Mission in your Will.

The Mission exists because God provides ---- but He provides through you! We thank you for your support and we keep you in our prayers. Please keep us in yours. ♦

Peter of the Heart of Jesus and Mary





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“Resurrexit, sicut dixit, Alleluia!”

