

BY HIS WOUNDS WE ARE HEALED! CAN IT BE?

My friends, as I grow older and quieter, as I ponder more like the Blessed Mother did, I find myself saying: We have no idea. We have no idea of the height and depth and length and breadth of the love of Our God poured out and manifested for all the world to see on the cross of Calvary. We have no idea.

But we want to have some idea. And the best way for us to achieve this is through time spent in prayer and reflection on the cross of Jesus Christ. There is such love there. Love, yes. And more. Forgiveness. Yes. And more. Hope in the face of rejection and evil. Yes. And Mercy. If ever there was a true statement it is this: "Our God is a merciful God."

Sister Faustina Kowalska the Polish nun to whom Our Lord appeared and showed himself as he is depicted on the picture behind me, kept a journal of her encounters with Jesus. Listen to this passage:

In the evening when I was in my cell, I saw the Lord Jesus clothed in white garment. One hand was raised in a gesture of blessing, the other was touching the garment at the breast. From beneath the garment slightly drawn aside at the breast, there were emanating two large rays, one red, the other pale. In silence I kept my gaze fixed on the Lord, my soul was struck with awe, but also with great joy. After a while Jesus said to me: "Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: Jesus, I trust in you. I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel, and then throughout the world. I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over its enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I myself will defend it as my own glory."

When I told this to my confessor, I received this for a reply: "That refers to your soul." He told me, "Certainly, paint God's image in your soul." When I came out of the confessional, I again heard words such as these: "My image is already in your soul. I desire that there be a Feast of Mercy. I want this image which you will paint with a brush to be solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter; that Sunday is to be the Feast of Mercy. I desire that priests proclaim this great mercy of mine towards souls of sinners. Let the sinner not be afraid to approach me. The

flames of mercy are burning me—clamoring to be spent; I want to pour them out upon these souls.”

We have no idea. Christ desires to pour out the purifying flames of his love on sinners. There is hope. Yes. But there is also sin. And we have to be clear. We human beings are sinners. We commit sin. We fail to act as we know we should. But we don't like to admit that we sin. We hate to admit our failures, our slothfulness, our rationalizations, our lusts and lies, our grasping ways and callous disregard of those who need. Sin is real. And it is destructive. But it will not have the last word. That is Christ's word to us.

So we must start with an honest appraisal of the state of our soul and the inordinate desires of our heart. We have to acknowledge that we cannot extricate ourselves from the pit in which we find ourselves any more than we can resolve this coronavirus by ourselves. This virus is not even a living thing and yet it debilitates and insinuates and destroys. So does sin. If we will not be real about sin then Christ's Divine Mercy will not enter. There needs to be an honesty and a humility on our part. The Lord will do the rest. The burning flame of his love issues forth from his wounded side.

That is what the picture shows. By his wounds we will be healed. He knows what happens to us in this life. He alone can save us from it. He alone. He alone is Divine Mercy. We can go to him. We can approach him. We can open our hearts to him in the ugliness of our need, in the brokenness of our lives, in the fears and compulsions that we are powerless to overcome or rid ourselves of, and he will cauterize our wounds with the flame of his merciful love and heal us. Just like that. He has healed me in so many ways. But not until I let Him, not until I wanted Him to, not until I let him into my life. We can help, point to, encourage, model for another person. But each of us must stand before the mercy seat of Christ and ask for his love to enfold us.

Look at a crucifix. Look at the Divine Mercy picture. Let the tears come. Stop resisting. Stop postponing. Let the Lord do for you and give to you that which you need and which only He can give. Dare to believe his mercy is—for you. All yours.

May the Lord bless us today and give us his peace.