

TRUE STORY OF DIVINE MERCY

A relatively young priest is in a hospital visiting some of his parishioners. He is walking down the hallway, and a nun stops him and says, "Father, can you go into this room? There's a man on his deathbed. He's been here for days. We've asked priests to go in, but he chases everyone away. He doesn't want to talk about Jesus. But he's dying. Could you please visit him?" The priest goes in and introduces himself to the patient. The guy erupts and starts cursing at him. He is so angry: "I don't want anything to do with you. Get out of here!" The priest says, "Okay" and goes out into the hall. The nun is still there. She says, "Could you go back in?" The priest replies, "He doesn't want anything I have to offer." "Just give it another chance," pleads the nun.

The priest reluctantly reenters the room. "I'm not going to ask if you want to go to confession. I'm not going to ask if you want Holy Communion. But is it okay if I just sit here next to your bed and pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy?" The old man replies, "I don't care. Do whatever you want." The priest sits down and begins softly praying the words of the Chaplet:

**"For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.
For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world..."**

Suddenly the man bursts out, "Stop it!" Startled, the priest looks up and asks, "Why?" "Because there is no mercy for me!" "Why do you think there is no mercy for you?" asks the priest. "It doesn't matter," responds the old man. But the priest persists: "Why do you think there is no mercy for you?" "I'll tell you... Twenty-five years ago, I was working for the railroad. My job was to lower the crossing guard arm when a train would come to prevent cars from going on the tracks. But one night I was drunk. I didn't lower the crossing guard arm, and a couple and their three young children were on the tracks as a train came, and they were all killed instantly. That was my fault. So there is no mercy for me. I have failed. It is over."

The priest just sits there staring at the rosary in his hands. Finally, he asks, "Where was this?" The man tells him the name of the Polish town. The priest looks up at him and says, "Twenty-five years ago, my mom and my dad were taking my little brothers and sister on a trip. I couldn't go with them. They were driving through this small town. For some reason, the railroad crossing guard arm wasn't lowered. As they were crossing the tracks, a train came and killed them all. I lost my whole family that night.

"The priest gazes intently into the man's face, and he says, **"My brother, God forgives you. Not only that, but I also forgive you."** The man realizes that God's mercy is for him. The priest asks, "Would you let me hear your confession and give you the Eucharist?" The man makes his confession and receives Holy Communion. Two days later he dies. Mercy wins. His failure is not final.

BUT. The story goes on. There's more to it. It's kind of cool.

After giving the man Communion, the priest goes into the hallway in search of the nun. He can't find her. He goes to the hospital administrator. The administrator tells him, "We don't employ any nuns at this hospital." For years the priest does not know who this nun is. Eventually, he goes to the town of Vilnius in Poland, which is where Saint Faustina lived. He goes to the convent to say Mass for the nuns there. He sees a painting on the wall of Saint Faustina, and he says, "I've met that nun. A couple of years ago." "No, Father, you did not," replies one of the nuns. "She's been dead since 1938." The priest then realizes it was Sister Faustina who told him to go into the patient's room, told him to go back again into that room.

Failure is not final. Not when it comes to Jesus. Jesus is not dead. He was. He has risen, and He is ruling over His creation using His almighty power to direct everything in the world to get you safely to that eternal life. AND, he has not abandoned us. He has found a way to remain with us and abide with us while we journey on this earth. He has chosen to become good bread for us. Bread that sustains. Bread that gives life. And he who was able to transform water into wine has also transformed himself into bread. It looks like bread and tastes like bread but it is transformed, changed. It is now the Body of Christ—by his own word.

He who is love. He who is the Father's gift of love to us has turned his love into bread to sustain us while we sojourn. And that love is a merciful love. It brings us a reason to hope and it deepens our faith. These three things are all that really last in life, faith and hope and love. The greatest of these? Is LOVE.

This morning we have two men and a young woman who will make their profession of faith and enter the Catholic faith. They have already been baptized in other Christian denominations so there is no need to re-baptize them. They will make a simple declaration of faith as Catholics, renew their baptismal promises and receive the sacrament of Confirmation. At Communion they will receive their first Holy Communion as Catholics. There is also another parishioner who will receive Confirmation with them today, a young mom with her husband. All of this is a great blessing on our parish. When will all this take place? Right now.

May the Lord bless us on this feast of Corpus Christi and give us his peace.