

April 18, 2020

Tomorrow is in the calendar of the Church is the Second Sunday of Easter but since the time of John Paul II it is also, Divine Mercy Sunday and lots of Catholic parishes all over the world, and, presumably, lots of Catholics get really involved in Divine Mercy.

It has never made much sense to me, either theologically or biblically or liturgically, but it really does to others, or so it seems.

The story is that there was woman, Faustina Kowalska, born in Poland in the early years of the 20th century who, at least as I read it, worked as a housekeeper and paid her way into an order of nuns.

Early on she started having what she claimed were conversations with Jesus who according to the story asked her to be his “secretary” eventually she met a priest who advised her, as the story goes, to pick an artist to paint a picture of Jesus and keep a diary of the conversations.

The picture was picked, a kind of typical tall, pale skinned European Jesus with a rainbow, yes, a rainbow, emanating from his heart, and she died in 1938.

John Paul II, with his own merciless history, got fascinated with her and, so now, here we are in a world overflowing with misery, and I am sure an abundance of basic human mercy, in hospitals and nursing homes and slums and ghettos and palaces and among and between strangers all over the world, hungry for everything familiar and safe, with a blatant lack of mercy in the minds of those who feel that they are being denied basic rights because they cannot go to the beauty shop or buy fertilizer for their lawns and other such nonsense.

And on top of all of that, in Schererville, our little Schererville, yesterday, I believe, a little 5-year-old boy was killed, punched and bitten so hard that one of his lungs exploded, by his mother's 20 something boyfriend.

Faustina's experience of the political chaos of early 20th century Poland and the undoubtedly sin/purgatory/hell obsessed Catholic world of those days, could drive anyone to seek some order, some mercy, outside of our real world in a world of the mind's imagining.

I succumb to the temptation to escape this real world and lose myself in endless surfings of the internet, as lots of people do with pot and /or alcohol, or, I read, baking bread but if we are to learn anything from these days, if we are to grow, we need to honestly admit we are scared, sad, frustrated, confused, angry, and a whole lot of other real feelings based on our real suffering and the real suffering of so many others.

Only in that raw honesty with ourselves can we find mercy and be merciful, as Jesus has clearly taught, "Blessed are those who show mercy, for they will BE shown mercy." This is the real ***quid pro quo***.