



1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2020

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WHY IS DIVINE MERCY THE ANSWER: EPILOGUE

FROM THE BOOK: DIVINE MERCY ANSWERS
LIFE'S CRISES AND PROBLEMS

By Rev. George W. Kosicki, C.S.B.

In times of life's crises and problems such as depression, dark nights of the soul, wandering mind, fears, discouragement, confusion about the truth, difficult times, violence around, suffering, full of doubts, powerless, things falling apart, addiction, scandalized by the Church, war, calamities, one can find the answer through the DIVINE MERCY.

Why Divine Mercy? Because mercy is God's way. Mercy is God's love for us, his covenant love, his forgiving love for us sinners. Mercy is the topic of Pope John Paul II's second encyclical "Rich in Mercy." Since its publication I've had the opportunity to read and reread the encyclical many times and to reflect on it and teach on it on various occasions. As a result I am now in a better position to consider the question, "Why mercy?" The answer to that question is what the encyclical is about. Mercy is the answer to the basic questions and problems of our times. I want to reflect on mercy as the answer as described for us in John Paul's encyclical.

Mercy is the prophetic word of our times. We hear so many voices calling us one way or another. Here the Holy Father is calling us not only to practice, profess, and proclaim mercy but also to implore mercy. His voice is clear and certain: implore mercy.

Mercy is the answer to the "uneasiness" of our times. The Latin text uses several different words to translate the rich Polish word "niepokuj" (literally, non-peace or non-shalom) which is used some half-dozen times in section (#11) describing the current unrest in our day. The "uneasiness" of our times is described as a state of solicitude, anxiety, anguish, unrest, turbulence, danger, and trepidation. To all of these John Paul says that the answer is mercy. Justice alone is not enough. Only mercy can bring about the unity we need for peace.

Mercy is the power of love that is greater than evil, greater than sin and death, greater than Satan. Mercy is God's power at work. It is only his mercy that will bring about the full victory. His triumph will come about by his sovereign action of mercy. Our part is to implore his mercy on us and on the whole world.

Mercy is the content and power of Christ's mission and so also of the Church. Mercy is the sum of the gospel: "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy" (see Mt 5, 7, RSV).

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FEASTS FOR APRIL

The feasts on the General Roman Calendar celebrated during the month of April are:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 2 Francis of Paola, Opt. Mem. | 23 George; Adalbert, Opt. Mem. |
| 4 St. Isidore, Opt. Mem. | 24 St. Fidelis, Opt. Mem. |
| 5 Palm Sunday, Sunday | 25 St. Mark, Feast |
| 9 Holy Thursday, Triduum | 26 Third Sunday of Easter, Sunday |
| 10 Good Friday, Triduum | 28 Peter Chanel (NZ, Feast); Louis Mary de Montfort;
Gianna Molla, mother (Italy), Opt. Mem. |
| 11 Holy Saturday, Triduum | 29 Catherine of Siena, Memorial |
| 12 Easter Sunday, Solemnity | 30 Pius V; Bl. Marie de l'Incarnacion (Can), Memorial |
| 13 Monday in the Octave of Easter, Solemnity | |
| 14 Tuesday in the Octave of Easter, Solemnity | |
| 15 Wednesday in the Octave of Easter, Solemnity | |
| 16 Thursday in the Octave of Easter, Solemnity | |
| 17 Friday in the Octave of Easter, Solemnity | |
| 18 Saturday in the Octave of Easter, Solemnity | |
| 19 Second Sunday of Easter (or Sunday of Divine
Mercy), Solemnity | |
| 21 Anselm, Opt. Mem. | |

The feasts of St. Vincent Ferrer (April 5) and Our Lady of Good Counsel (April 26) fall on Sunday and are superseded the Sunday liturgy. The feasts of St. John Baptist de la Salle (April 7) and St. Stanislaus (April 11) are superseded by the Holy Week Liturgy. The feasts of St. Martin I (April 13) and St. Bernadette (April 16), are superseded by the Easter Week liturgy. ☐

THANK YOU

... a small and simple phrase that comes from a grateful heart!

Psalm 106:2

<p><u>Las Vegas, Nevada</u></p> <p>800 Our Father Devotion April 18, 2020</p> <p>Maria Luisa Sheets</p>	<p><u>Los Angeles, California</u></p> <p>800 Our Father Devotion April 18, 2020</p> <p>Adriana Arguello Vic & Alice Araneta Marco & Norma Gamboa Frank & Beth Lim Ben & Vincie Ong Leonida Putong</p>
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OUR CENACLE CORNER

*Seeking a deeper relationship with God
through meditation of passages from Holy Scriptures*

CARRYING OUR OWN CROSS



GOD TOUCHED ME

THE JOYS OF MARRIAGE

*By Bon & Ruth Mercado, devotees
Shared During a Spiritual Retreat in the Fall of 2019*

*"And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them."
- 1 John 4:16*

Hello, my name is Bon Mercado and this is my beautiful wife Ruth and we are here to talk to you about the "Joys of Marriage". When we started to put our thoughts down on this topic, we thought it was going to be easy to list out all the joys from our own marriage. #1 Sex - like all the time (JOY!) #2 - someone else cooking for you (JOY!) - #3 - did I mention sex already? All kidding aside, because Marriage is a sacrament, God's love becomes present in our marital union and extends to our family and community. When we experience joy in our marriage, it is an extension of God's love for us. We like to say that our joys are really blessings from God.

RUTH: A little about my upbringing, I was born and raised in Southern California. I am the oldest of three daughters. Both my parents were born in the Philippines and immigrated to the United States as young singles, paired up on a blind date where they were matched up by mutual friends. They dated for a couple of months before my Dad decided my Mom was the one for him. They married and celebrated their first anniversary with me, their 5 day old daughter. My middle sister made her appearance just 14 months later and my youngest sister, was my answered prayer that I asked God for when I was 9 years old. My parents did their best to provide a happy and normal childhood for my sisters and me. We were a happy, traditional, Filipino Catholic family that was led in faith by my Mom. Growing up with a strong, prayer-filled warrior, that being my Mom, we attended Catholic elementary and high schools, went to mass every Sunday and even participated in a local Filipino Rosary group that my mom would host in our home every couple of months. I remember many joyful times with my family. A few of my favorite memories include Christmas time at my grandpa's house in Norwalk. My aunts and uncles would manage to squeeze what seemed like 100 people into his house (that only had one bathroom), where we would excitedly wait for our special guest of honor - Santa, who always appeared at the front door bringing a trash bag full of gifts for every single person at our party. Cousins, aunts and uncles would join in on our summer caravan road trips that would take us up and down the West Coast and many travels to my grandpa's happiest place on earth, Las Vegas, where we would often times stay at the luxurious Circus Circus. Actually, who am I kidding... we'd

sleep like sardines next door at the ever spacious 5 star hotel chain, Travelodge. My Dad is the eldest of 7 children. Each of my Uncles and Aunties has an average of 3 kids. So when we get together for family time, we have a JOYFUL & HUGE, potluck event. It was growing up around this happy family-filled environment that really set the tone for what I wanted when I was to start a family of my own.

BON: Unlike Ruth, I was born in the Philippines and was baptized Catholic. I am the youngest of 3 children and was raised in my early years primarily by my Dad. My mother passed away when I was only 6 months old. When she passed away, my oldest sister was 5 and my brother was 3. To provide for his family, my dad found a job in Hawaii and eventually moved us to Long Beach where all my mom's great aunts and great uncles... or as we called them, lolas and lolos lived. They offered to take care of us while my dad worked. I knew what a family meant and I understood how valuable relatives were. But having a mom in my life and seeing what marriage was about, was not in the cards for me. Since I lost my mom at such a young age, growing up without her was normal. I had my older sister who helped raise me and my Lolos were always nearby to keep me on a straight and narrow path, which was sometimes difficult to do while living on the Westside of Long Beach. TV was also my savior. I loved TV. Mrs. Brady, Mrs. Cunningham, Mrs. Huxtable, Mrs. Seaver...all these TV Moms combined, became my proxy mom. These TV families showed me a positive view of what a joyful and fun marriage were like. What I saw on TV was what I wanted my future marriage and family to be like. When I was 6, my Dad remarried. You can imagine how super excited I was to finally have a mother figure in my life. I immediately accepted her as my mom and did everything that was asked of me in order to be a good son. For the first time ever, I had a mother. At first, everything seemed great. But at the same time, I was too young to understand other details of their marriage. I would mentally block out the constant fighting they would have over money and the verbal abuse they would give each other. I would even ignore the verbal fights and sometimes physical fights that my older sister would have

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SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RECOMMENDED

SEEKING INSPIRATIONAL THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS THROUGH THE BIBLE

BY VICTOR ARANETA

THE ARTICLES IN THIS COLUMN HAVE BEEN COMPILED INTO A BOOKLET
AND WILL BE LAUNCHED SOON. WHEN AND HOW YOU CAN GET A COPY
WILL BE ANNOUNCED. ☐

I am your mother Mary

*My children continue your prayers
of peace and physical well-being.*

*Everything that's happening will continue until
the hands of God are raised and the angel of
destruction and death is restricted to relent.*

Mercy and forgiveness are God's qualities.

*Until that time, the world will experience
the Almighty God's wrath !*

*Pray unceasingly my children,
pray unceasingly*

Mary, Your Lady of the Rosary
03072020

Upcoming Events

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

PASSING OF THE CROSS

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 2020

MASS BEGINS AT 8:30 AM

SISTER DISCIPLES OF THE DIVINE MASTER

CELEBRATION OF

SAINT PEDRO CALUNGSOD

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2020

SISTER DISCIPLES OF THE DIVINE MASTER

PROCESSION BEGINS AT 8:30 AM

HOLY MASS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWS

FEAST OF THE

DIVINE MERCY

SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2020

IN LOS ANGELES: 1:45 PM

THE MONASTERY OF THE ANGELES

1977 CARMEN AVENUE ON GOWER

IN LAS VEGAS: 2:30 PM

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES CATHOLIC CHURCH

MOTHER MARYS' CORONATION

SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2020

IN LOS ANGELES:

CONVENT OF THE SISTER DISCIPLES

OF THE DIVINE MASTER

PROCESSION BEGINS AT 8:30 AM

HOLY MASS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWS

IN LAS VEGAS:

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT RETREAT

OCTOBER 16, 17 AND 18, 2020

ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE CHURCH

CHINO HILLS, CA

PLEASE E-MAIL DENISE AT

DENISE.G@SPIRITUALARMYOFGOD.ORG

FOR REGISTRATION DETAILS

WHY IS DIVINE MERCY THE ANSWER: EPILOGUE

The fullest revelation of mercy is in Jesus. Jesus shows us in person the mercy of the Father. Jesus is mercy in the flesh, "mercy incarnate", as the Pope describes him. This revelation of God's mercy is centered in the Heart of Jesus, pierced for us on the cross. Christ crucified and risen never ceases to speak to us of mercy.

The Heart of Mary, the Mother of Mercy, continues to reveal this mercy. She who knew and obtained God's mercy like no other, shares in revealing God's mercy by the sacrifice of her heart. What Jesus came to reveal, her heart continues to reveal. Hers is the merciful love of a mother that continues to proclaim: "His mercy is ... from generation to generation" (Lk 1, 50, RSV) — even to this our generation.

Pope John Paul II's final chapter is a powerful appeal to implore mercy [Love's second name] on the world. He concludes by praying:

May the Love which is in the Father once again be revealed at this stage of history, and that, through the work of the Son and the Holy Spirit, may that Love be shown to be present in our modern world and to be more powerful than evil: more powerful than sin and death. We pray for this through the intercession of Mary who does not cease to proclaim mercy ... from generation to generation, and also through the intercession of those for whom there have been completely fulfilled the words of the Sermon of the Mount: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

So why Divine Mercy? Because mercy is the answer. ☐

About the Author Fr. George W. Kosicki, CSB, is a well-known speaker and renowned authority on the message and devotion of Divine Mercy. A frequent radio and TV host, Fr. Kosicki is a favorite guest on the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN), and an author and editor of many books. ☐

THE JOYS OF MARRIAGE

with our mom. Eventually, my parents had another child and we welcomed my little sister to the family. With the addition of another mouth to feed, added levels of responsibility and stress was put on my parents. The arguing, bickering and visible lack of joy was pretty obvious. As I got older I realized there was no joy in this marriage, but I still had hope. If TV families could stay together, be happy and be full of joy, my future family could too. So I was personally determined to not have that type of marriage.

RUTH: Bon and I met during the second semester of my freshman year at Cal State Fullerton. Geology class to be exact. I was sitting with a group of new friends when I noticed an oddly dressed dude wearing neon pink short shorts, a loose tank top and a visor turned upside down with the words "Bon-er" embroidered on it. So not my type. It wasn't until a few weeks into the class, he sat across the aisle from me and during a short break, asked me a question about homework. It went something like this....

(BON) "Hi, I missed the last class and was wondering if I could borrow your notes. Would I be able to call you? By the way, are you Filipino? You are? I am too. I'm actually the Vice President of the Filipino Club, you should come to a meeting some time."

RUTH: Although I wasn't attracted to Bon at first, for those previously stated obvious reasons, we became close friends. I'd share with him my list of guys I thought were potential boyfriend material and talked to him almost every night on the phone....as friends.

BON: To be clear, I wasn't trying to pick up on Ruth when I first met her. I had a girlfriend at the time and I was actually trying to recruit members for the Filipino Club. Since she was so nice to share her notes in class and she was Filipino, I decided to invite her to the club meeting. From that point on...our friendship grew. I started to take note of how family oriented she was and how welcoming her family was of me. I noticed how close she was to her sisters and how much she loved being around her family. I also admired how strong her Catholic faith was. During my college years, I became lost in my own faith and actually became agnostic. As I spent more time with Ruth I slowly started to find my way back to the church but was still looking for a sign. In time, Ruth became my confidant and one of my closest friends who I loved being around every single day. My relationship with my girlfriend eventually fizzled and I found myself single. I wasn't looking for a relationship at that time but I found myself drawn to Ruth. Friends would constantly ask me about her and I would make up excuses that she was either not their

type or that Ruth was already interested in someone else. But in reality, I realized I fell for her and I didn't want anyone else to be with her. So, I drew up enough courage and told her how I felt...and she responded by saying....."I'm sorry, I just don't feel the same way."

<Waa waawaaa> IT'S All GOOD! NO BIGGIE! Pst....I'M GOOD!! #awkward #loser #wherecanIhide

RUTH: To be honest, I didn't know how I felt about him. He was my best friend and I loved all the time we spent together. But I never looked at him in that way. In the days after I told Bon that I didn't feel the same, he disappeared and stopped calling. I didn't blame him. I thought he probably hated me for what I said. But it was during that week that I truly missed him. As they say, absence makes the heart grow fonder...and I did miss him. So I reached out to him to try and make amends by hanging out again. This time around, I opened up my heart and let him in and have never looked back. We ended up dating for 5 years and were engaged for two years. During our engagement, Bon knew that I wanted to be married in the Catholic Church. He wanted to participate fully at our wedding mass so he came back to the Church for me. He enrolled in RCIA Classes, asked if I could be his sponsor and he received the Sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation during Easter Vigil Mass, 2001. We got married in May, 2002 at St Angela Merici Catholic Church in Brea.

BON: When Ruth and I got married, she had never lived on her own. Being independent and having a place of her own was a new experience. Because of this, I loved every moment of our early years. Especially when we moved in together and started making our first house a home. Spending all our time as newlyweds and learning how to live with one another are fond JOYFUL memories of those first years. Being able to travel was another great example of this. When we traveled together, all we cared about was discovering new things in new places...together. To this day, when I travel somewhere new for work, my first thought is always....I would have enjoyed it more if Ruth was with me...or that the next time I travel to this location, I need to bring Ruth with me. Traveling without my wife, just feels empty. I want to share the joy of discovering new places with her. Back in December 2003, who knew that one of the best JOYFUL travel memories for us was about to happen.

RUTH: When Bon turned 30, we both decided to celebrate with a trip to England and Italy to visit relatives and explore Europe together. Bon had not traveled out of the country since he moved to the U.S. as an infant, so this was the perfect opportunity to have an adventure!! I managed to find round trip tickets to London for \$200 each!!! We also made plans to visit my aunt in Rome who has been a nun for as long as I can remember. As we started planning the details of our trip, little did we know that God had something special

planned for us. I contacted my Aunt, Sister Antonia, who we call Sister Toni for short. She was so excited to hear that we were making plans to visit Rome that she immediately told us two very important things....

"Ruth, make sure you pack your wedding dress and please make sure Bon brings a nice suit." My first thought was, "It's been a year since our wedding, do I even fit into my wedding dress still?" After that brief thought, I then proceeded to ask her why, and she, as a matter of fact, replied, "I'm going to arrange for you and Bon to have a newlywed blessing with Pope John Paul II. I replied in shock saying, "Ok, thank you" and hung up...not really believing what I was hearing. I remember calling my mom immediately to share the news and she could not wait for us to get to Rome!! Two weeks after that phone call, Bon and I were on our way to Europe...first stop, Rome, Italy. Our plane arrived in the evening and our audience with the Pope was the following morning. I remember waking up and going through the motions of having breakfast, getting ready and putting on my wedding dress (it still fit by the way!) complete with my tiara headpiece...after all, this is what everyone does when they go to Rome, right?

BON: So there we were, in the second row next to couples from all over world about to meet the Pope. In my mind I kept thinking, this is a mistake. How did we get here? I told my coworkers before I left, "Alright...I'm off to see the Pope!" Yet none of them knew, nor did I know, how much truth was behind that statement. Soon after the ceremony started, we were lined up to kneel before his Holiness.

Up on stage, I noticed a large sized picture of Jesus. As we walked up, I could not stop looking at it. It was the image of the Divine Mercy. For those who are not familiar, it is a beautiful image of Jesus raising his right hand in blessing, and his left hand pointing to his chest with two rays of different colored light coming from his heart. The whole image is symbolic of charity, forgiveness and love of God. The face of Jesus was painted in such a way that HIS eyes seemed to follow you as you walked up to the Pope. So you can imagine I'm about to meet the Pope, the Divine Mercy Image is watching me and I already don't feel worthy of being here. So how would a person normally feel at this moment? For me, I got so nervous that I started Dry Heaving. Great! I'm about to meet the Pope and I'll be the guy that throws up in front of him. Fortunately, I was able to regain my composure and kneel before the Pope to get our marriage blessed. As Ruth and I reached out for him...he extended his hand. My first thought was...he was going to yank it away because of my sins or lack of Catholic Practices. But as I looked him in the eyes and Ruth asked him to bless our marriage, a sense of calm and shame came over me for thinking this way. So as we received our blessing, you can see in all our pictures that I had a very hard time looking at him. But

in hindsight, I now understand that God was by our side the whole time. His blessings to us, through the Pope, have always been with us since that special moment. Now we look at our marriage, our friends, our family and know that God has always been present in all our JOYFUL memories. What makes this memory even more meaningful and JOYOUS is that Pope John Paul the Second was canonized a Saint shortly after his death.

RUTH: Four months after our special Papal blessing, Bon and I found out we were expecting our first child. We were so happy to be able to grow our family...We were going to be parents!! With God's amazing grace, he blessed us with our first daughter Brooklyn and our lives would never be the same. We went from being a married couple to a family of three. Two years later, we would be blessed with our second daughter, Isabella, and after another two years we were blessed with our son, Noah. We were overjoyed! Finally a boy! We were done; our family was complete, right?

Before I continue, this part of our story started back about 6 years ago. My girlfriend, Rowena, was diagnosed with bile duct cancer at the young age of 36. She had a husband and two very young children. Our group of college friends rallied around her with prayers that quickly became weekly rosary gatherings at her childhood home here in Chino Hills. For a year and a half, our weekly Friday prayers were the norm for all of us which included her immediate family as well as our closest group of friends. Who would have thought that after finishing college 10 years prior, our group of friends would find strength in praying together, asking God to cure and spare the life of our dearest friend Rowena. While she was sick, Rowena and her husband JJ, decided to attend this Marriage Enrichment Retreat in the Fall of 2012. After the weekend was over, she couldn't stop talking about her excitement of the whole experience. She invited us to attend the following retreat. Unfortunately, we were unable to attend. Rowena passed away on June 27, 2013. To honor our friend, we decided to make the next marriage enrichment retreat a priority. We can say that St. Paul's Marriage Enrichment weekend was a gift from her and we have been active with this ministry for the last 5 years. It brings both Bon and I tremendous Joy in helping other married couples during these weekends. Witnessing Rowena's personal relationship with God strengthen as her health eventually declined, my own faith was reignited. I wanted to dig deeper into my own relationship with God. I started taking St. Ignatian Spiritual Classes, I joined her prayer group and even went on my first pilgrimage to visit all the Marian apparition sites in Europe. It was through these experiences, I realized I was open to what God had in store for us next. In 2016, life was good. We were the family we had envisioned when we first got married. Our girls were 11 & 9 and our youngest son was 7. They

were all self-sufficient. We were moving on to the next phase of our life when God's plan for us revealed itself yet again. In April of that same year, we found out that we were expecting Baby Mercado #4. A complete surprise blessing! Unlike the first 3 planned pregnancies, we were utterly shell shocked when the results of the pregnancy test turned out to be positive. We accepted this beautiful gift from God and on December 8, 2016, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Asher Rowen Mercado was born. We honored Rowena, our angel in heaven, by naming our son after her. The name Asher is a biblical name which means "Happy, Joyful and Blessed" and he truly is our surprise happy blessing that we cannot imagine living without.

BON: As Ruth and I look back at all our JOYOUS memories...from seeing our kids' first steps to various vacations to hysterical moments that only Ruth and I share, we find that these memories and moments brought us closer together as a married couple. Don't get us wrong, we have our challenges in life as well... but it's how we face those challenges together that make us stronger as husband and wife. Joys of marriage come from knowing that God chose Ruth and me to be together, for better or worse, in sickness and in health. Each day that we are together, we see his blessings. Just like a painting, sometimes we are too close to see the beauty of our life that stands before us. If we take a step back and view the whole picture, we can appreciate its true beauty.

RUTH: When we got married, we had no idea of what our future would look like and even now, 16 and a half years in, we have put our trust and faith in God, and have the peace in knowing that this is all in HIS DIVINE PLAN. To quote Philippians 4: 4-8: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. To paraphrase, Let Go and let God, leave it all in his hands...and that is where HE will gift you with true JOY.

BON and RUTH: Thank you for listening to our story. May God bless you all with a joyful, happy marriage. ☐