

PASTOR'S COLUMN

Divine Mercy, and St. Louis Awards

Divine Mercy. In 1995, a woman approached me about having a celebration of Divine Mercy on the Second Sunday of Easter: a special Mass, a Novena, a Divine Mercy Image in Church, and Confessors to administer the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I had a hard time understanding her request since we celebrate God's mercy and the triumph of Jesus over sin at every Mass. Her request and her persistence caused me to do some research. I learned that Jesus, in mystical revelations in the 1930's to a Polish nun named Sr. Faustina Kowalska, directed her to have a Divine Mercy Feast Day set in the Church because people just didn't comprehend the incredible mercy of God for sinners.

In the year 2,000, Pope St. John Paul II declared the Second Sunday of Easter "Divine Mercy Sunday" in the Universal Church, fulfilling Jesus' request. He later proclaimed a Divine Mercy Indulgence (the remission of Purgatory time) for those who confess their sins and fulfill the other requirements for an indulgence (See article in this bulletin).

So today, the Second Sunday of Easter, we celebrate the incomprehensibly generous mercy of God for sinners by virtue of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus. God forgives our sins through the Sacrament of Reconciliation and even remits the punishment or consequences for sin in the life to come. How about that for awesome!

St. Louis Awards. St. Louis IX, King of France, is the Patron Saint of the City and Archdiocese of New Orleans. Each year, the Archbishop honors two individuals or two married couples from each parish for outstanding service in their home parish with the "St. Louis Award." Since I am new to the parish, I asked our Parish Staff and Parish Council for suggestions for this year's honorees. I received about 20 names of people who give of themselves generously to our Church and School. After prayer, I chose two individuals for the honor, Carol Pritchard and Wayne Wetzel.

Carol is a part-time Parish Staff member who directs our high-quality Sharing Program for seniors. She is a daily communicant and Eucharistic Minister and works with our hospitality and bereavement ministries and the Archdiocesan Synod. Wayne is a daily communicant and omnipresent "worker bee" for our Parish and School, opening and closing buildings, setting up and taking down for meetings, cleaning, ushering masses, and generally doing anything needed. Both Carol and Wayne are can-do people of faith.

In addition to Carol and Wayne, Sarah McDonald, a St. Francis parishioner and school mom, is receiving the St. Louis Award from the Archbishop himself for her long-time work in the Communications Ministry of the Archdiocese. Please join me in congratulating Carol, Wayne and Sarah for a job well done. And God's blessings to all as we enter the second week of the 50-day Season of Easter.

Fr. Joe