

Divine Mercy and the Universal Church

By Fr Paul Kronbergs

My dear brothers and sisters, it is with great joy and grateful thanks that I am here sharing this very special time with you and feel very humble to have been asked to share our story with you. I am an Anglican, you might say one of the separated brethren, and not only that, I am the least of my brothers. I am an assistant, self-supporting priest earning my living in the North East of England as a boilermaker. I very much believe that my call is to seek out God's lost and broken children wherever they may be. In Middlesbrough, as in most of Great Britain, there is a big problem with drug and alcohol addiction, and many of our young people are reduced to selling their bodies to buy drugs in order to feed their addiction. These addictions, this evil, destroys lives and many of these young people come to me in tears. We offer practical help, but there is also another kind of help, which God Himself offers so I take them to the Image of Mercy and tell them about Gods Merciful Love.

Divine Mercy is not very well known in the Anglican Church and I discovered it quite by accident. I happened to be rummaging through a second hand bookshop and I came across a rather thick book with a nun on the front cover, entitled "The Diary of St Faustina". My first thought was that this book would take rather a long time to read and did I really want to read a 'nuns diary'? (*We have nuns as well*) But then I noticed the rest of the title, "Divine Mercy in my Soul", and I thought yes I do, and so I bought the book. When I began to read the Diary I could see how the revelation of Divine Mercy to St Faustina was very important for our world today, with so many people turning away from Christ and His Church, and how this very much related to what I was being called to do. As I read the Diary I had a vision of the distorted dark images of the lost and the broken with their hands raised to our Merciful Lord. They were all calling out, crying out for His Mercy and I could see the red and pale rays coming down bringing healing, wholeness and enlightenment, and that this was cleansing their souls. The Diary had a massive impact on me and I felt compelled to set up a shrine and to share what I had discovered with others. I went to my superiors, to Fr Cooper the parish priest, and to our diocesan bishop to ask for their permission to set up a shrine. We sought to have the image painted and this was eventually completed by a very gifted Christian artist and iconographer. Right from the beginning I felt that Divine Mercy was universal and that this needed to be reflected in the blessing on the shrine and so it was blessed and dedicated on Divine Mercy Sunday by Bishops and Priests from the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican traditions The atmosphere in the Church that Sunday evening was electrifying and

seemed to be filled with our Lord's Divine Love, everybody could sense it. Our small apostolate then began a regular devotion to the Divine Mercy on a monthly basis, singing the Chaplet, listening to sacred music, offering intercession, venerating the Image and ending with either Holy Anointing with the laying on of hands, or Benediction.

I just knew that I had to bring people to the Image and talk to them about God's infinite Mercy. I tell them about God's Merciful Love and, for those who are troubled, we pray together in front of the Image, and ask for healing. I find that for many healing comes out of forgiveness through the sacrament of reconciliation. The miracles that I have witnessed are in broken lives restored, in broken people being renewed through God's Divine love and Mercy, to see a light come on in eyes that were once dark and glazed over.

I was asked what it means to me as a priest, to minister as a Divine Mercy priest, I have no doubt about the consequences of this. I hear those same words that God spoke to the prophets in ages past. "I have called you to seek out the lost and to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel of Mercy. If you fail to do this then the lost will remain lost, and you yourself will be lost. But if you do go to them and they listen they will be saved and you too will have saved your own soul."

There is something else that strikes me about this devotion. When I have met fellow apostles of Divine Mercy, I have discovered they all have the same thing in common; they all seem to be blessed with an infusion of Divine Love. Have you noticed that? This is one of the many graces, which our Lord has poured out for us and continues to pour out. Those devoted to Divine Mercy are not concerned with denominations, because they love with the love of Christ. For me this is the greatest of the miracles, because we have all been blessed with that love that Jesus prayed to His Father for; that His disciples would love each other as he has loved them. Divine Mercy not only heals the lost and broken, it heals us, it brings us back to where we are meant to be as Christians, and in doing so it heals our broken Church.

Many of my disaffected Anglican brothers are leaving the Anglican Church for the Ordinariate. It would be very easy for me to take up the Holy Father's gracious offer, but I believe I must stay where I am, as difficult as that may become, because the Anglican Church is in need of Divine Mercy as well. It is my intention to spread devotion to The Divine Mercy where I am, and I can do that because I know that you are all with me on that mission. I know that I am never on my own because in reality we are all one in God's infinite and incomprehensible Divine Mercy, and I know that we always will be, and for that I give grateful thanks to God and to you my dear brothers and sisters.