

Divine Mercy Sunday was instituted in the Church on the Second Sunday of Easter on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2000 and decreed on May 5<sup>th</sup> of same year. Since then, there have been many questions as to the requirements of a correct celebration of this Feast of Mercy.

First and foremost, we must realize that it is a refuge for sinners and not a party for devotees. Up until the establishment of the feast in the universal Catholic Church, parishes in many parts of the world had to make separate masses as to not “interfere” with the flow of regular Sunday masses.

Today, there is a great need for educating pastors in how to sort out what is actually necessary to correctly celebrate the feast.

The Vatican has laid out all the details in the decree for the special indulgence that was issued specifically for Divine Mercy Sunday. Emphasis was placed in the last paragraph entitled “Duties of Priests” and it includes the following requirements:

**Inform Parishioners** in the most suitable manner of the special plenary indulgence.

**Hear Confessions:** they should promptly and generously hear their confessions.

**Lead the Prayers** for the indulgence after celebrating mass, vespers, other devotions.

**Encourage works of mercy** and charity as often as they can in imitation of Christ.

Note: This decree has perpetual force, any provision to the contrary notwithstanding. Published on August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2002 in the Vatican’s L’Osservatore Romano.

**Let’s look at what these duties involve:**

**Informing Parishioners about the plenary indulgence in the most suitable way.** This duty must point to the proclamation of it particularly on Easter Sunday when all of the churches are full to overflowing with souls who have not confessed in decades. What could be a more appropriate time? They are the ones who can most benefit.

**Suggestion:** Use the Bulletin Insert and the Confession Guide in all Easter Bulletins. It can be found at: [www.MercySunday.com](http://www.MercySunday.com) .

**Include these words in the Easter Homily:**

*\* “If you haven’t had a chance to make your yearly confession, don’t miss out on this great opportunity, because next Sunday is our new feast called Divine Mercy Sunday. What our Church is offering next week is called a plenary indulgence, and what this means, in very simple terms, is that, if we go to Confession and then receive Holy Communion, we can obtain the complete and total forgiveness of all sins and all punishment”.*

**We also can’t forget all the other Catholics that do not attend Sunday mass at all.**

These souls also need to hear the Good News of the special Plenary Indulgence. Place articles in all the local newspapers, use every form of media including radio and TV spots telling everyone about the incredible opportunity to obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. Don’t let anyone get away without hearing about what the Church offers on Mercy Sunday.

**Hearing Confessions in a prompt and generous manner.** Many people will want to take advantage of the total forgiveness of sins and punishment and will be asking priests to hear their confessions. Be ready for an onslaught of people who have been away from confession for decades. Many priests will be uplifted with the experience and will want to hear many more of these.

**Suggestion:** Schedule extra time and extra priests for confessions and advertise them, verbally, in the bulletin, and in the media. Encourage those who have already gone to Confession to make room for others to go. The Vatican allows up to about 20 days, before or after, to go to Confession.

**Leading the Prayers after the masses and other liturgical events on that day.** The Church wants everybody to be able to receive the grace of the indulgence and has instructed priests to lead the prayers.

Suggestion: On Mercy Sunday after all the masses, lead the prayers for the indulgence which are: the Our Father, Apostles Creed, and a special prayer for the Pope, possibly a Hail Mary. Include also an invocation such as “Merciful Jesus, I trust in You”.

**Encourage the Faithful to practice works of Mercy and Charity** as often as they can, following the example of, and obeying the commandments of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Suggestion:** Encourage the faithful to go out and to seek that which was lost and to bring them to the Feast of Mercy. What better act of mercy could there be than to help their fellow man to gain eternal life?

## Follow these 8 simple steps:

- 1. Prepare a homily for Easter Sunday** using the suggested words\* in this leaflet.
- 2. Copy and Print the Bulletin Insert and the Confession Guide** from the web at the [www.MercySunday.com](http://www.MercySunday.com) website. Put them into all of the Easter bulletins.
- 3. Remind those that have already gone to Confession** (within 20 days) to make room for others that didn't confess yet.
- 4. Schedule extra time for Confessions** with all available priests on the Saturday before Divine Mercy Sunday if possible.
- 5. Place articles in all local Newspapers** telling everyone about the forgiveness of all sins and punishment that is available. Include the times for Confession. Involve other parishes if they are in the same area.
- 6. Obtain an Image of Divine Mercy** if the parish does not have one to help with the liturgy on Divine Mercy Sunday and as a permanent installation for graces.
- 7. Prepare Homily for Mercy Sunday** to focus on the forgiveness of sins and make it a point to tell everyone again about the plenary indulgence. Remind everyone of the need for a sacramental Confession of all grave sin before receiving Communion. Include the need to make a perfect Act of Contrition for those that did not confess.
- 8. On Divine Mercy Sunday just before the distribution of Communion, lead everyone in the Act of Contrition.** Many in attendance will not remember it at all.

First of all, we must recognize the need to get all Catholics back to the practice of their faith. We have a grand opportunity and duty on Easter Sunday to catechize all the Easter-only Catholics and invite them back into participation in the sacramental life of the Church. We cannot let these souls receive Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin, it is a sacrilege.

Canons 768, 769, 777.1, and 773 clearly state the responsibilities of priests. It is imperative that we use this opportunity to instruct these souls with a basic catechesis on why they should confess their serious sins before receiving the Eucharistic Lord.

We should also reach out to those Lapsed Catholics in our local areas who no longer attend mass at all. We can do this through every media possible including TV, radio, and newspapers. We also need to reach out and share the good news of the Gospel to those who live within our territory, who are non-believers, as we are called to do as evangelists as it is stated in Canon 771.2.

We will humbly turn to the Church and follow her direction and we will all be tremendously blessed. Our Lord Jesus reminded us of the need to leave the 99 to get the 1 that was lost, and how much all of Heaven rejoices when just one of those sinners repents and returns (Luke 15: 4-7).

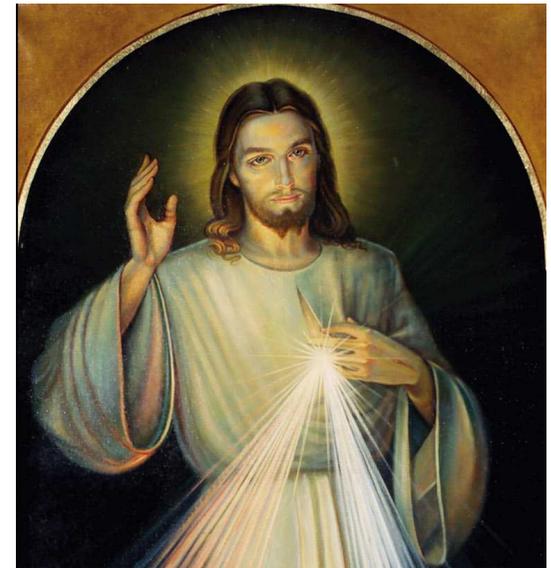
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# How to Celebrate Mercy Sunday!



A step by step guide to the correct celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday

Includes the “Duties of Priests” that are in the special (perpetual) Plenary Indulgence issued by the Vatican that are the guiding light for those priests wanting to correctly celebrate this great Feast of Divine Mercy.

Geared towards bishops and priests, this guide will show how to correctly celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday in such a way that will yield tremendous fruit and the return of Catholics to the practice of their faith.

Every parish and diocese can experience growth and the joy of seeing the lost sheep being brought back into the fold (Church).