

## GOD'S MERCY IS DIVINE

One of the few television programs I watch on a regular basis is Survivor. It is a reality show where contestants are competing with each other for a million dollars and this season's participants are all past champions. Therefore this season's winner will be awarded two million dollars. Part way through this 40th season, as has been done in past seasons, the show's crew began to hide immunity carvings or idols around the camp to be found by the contestants. The person who finds one can be saved and protected from being eliminated if they choose to use it at their weekly Tribal Council when they fear being voted off the show. There have been many contestants over the years who have found the idol and never used it. Sadly most got voted off and sent home with everything they needed to save themselves right in their pocket. It becomes a test of the inner will, do I feel safe or don't I? So many never use it because they are convinced they are "safe". One contestant who had two in his pocket, but felt so secure he never used them. He was saving them for another time, yet he was blind sided and voted out, far from ever winning one million dollars.

God's mercy is not to be hidden. We should never hide what God has provided for us. His Divine Mercy won for us on the cross is real. He has proven the forgiveness of sins and we are safe, not based on something we have found, but based on the fact that God so loved the world that He sent His only Son Jesus to die for us. So often we can miss the depths of God's mercy. Sometimes we mistakenly may feel secure, as though we can make it through a day without God. We may try to do this life all on our own, but God wants to break through. It is His protection and love He wants to offer us. There is no false security or hope, when we claim that which He graces to us.

In the Gospel Thomas needs extra help to believe. He needs things to happen to him, rather than base his belief on what the others have told him. Jesus comes to him and shows him that He is real. The believing Thomas proclaims with his whole being, "**My Lord and my God.**" He comes to this realization most profoundly because he acknowledges his sinfulness of doubt and lack of trust. Our own sinfulness leads us to Divine Mercy. The more honest we are, the more God can show the depth of His love. When we go deep by admitting the worst darkness and sinfulness of our lives, Jesus is right here to show us His hands and feet and let us know He paid the price for our sins. In this experience we are personally led to echo the proclamation of Thomas, "**My Lord and my God.**" This acknowledgement comes when we allow our sin to lead us to the One who has forgiven all sin through His death on a cross.

God's mercy is divine. May we acknowledge the reason we can experience it here on earth; Jesus the Son of God.



Reverend John J. Ouper