

## Divine Mercy 2020

*Confessions from noon-3pm. Then we will have the sung chaplet at 3pm with benediction livestreamed.*

The first reading is relevant to our situation, it describes the life of the Early Christians, “THEY DEVOTED THEMSELVES...TO THE COMMUNAL LIFE, TO THE BREAKING OF BREAD AND TO THE PRAYERS...ALL WHO BELIEVED WERE TOGETHER...EVERY DAY THEY DEVOTED THEMSELVES TO MEETING TOGETHER IN THE TEMPLE AREA AND TO BREAKING BREAD IN THEIR HOMES...AND EVERY DAY THE LORD ADDED TO THEIR NUMBER THOSE WHO WERE BEING SAVED.”

I’m afraid that as we endlessly discuss this whole situation and look around at how this or that doesn’t make sense, or are frustrated by government or church leadership – it can leave people in a place where they are just going to be kind of frozen in frustration, use that as an excuse to just do nothing.

**Fr. Walter Ciszek’ books: *With God in Russia* and *He Leadeth Me***

- Read or reread them!

*“Through the long years of isolation and suffering, God had led me to an understanding of life and his love that only those who have experienced it can fathom. He had stripped away from me many of the external consolations, physical and religious, that men rely on and had left me with a core of seemingly simple truths to guide me.”*

### **1. God upsets the ‘status quo’**

*“That same lesson each of us must learn, difficult or not. How easy it is, in times of ease, for us to become dependent on our routines, on the established order of our day-to-day existence, to carry us along. We begin to take things for granted, to rely on ourselves and on our own resources, to ‘settle in’ in this world and look to it for our support...Friends and possessions surround us, one day is followed by the next, good health and happiness for the most part are ours....It is the ‘status quo’ that we rely on, that carries us from day to day, and somehow we begin to lose sight of the fact that under all these things and behind all these things it is God who supports and sustains us. We go along, taking for granted that tomorrow will be very much like today, comfortable in the world we have created for ourselves... and give little thought to God at all. Somehow, then, God must contrive to break through those routines of ours...”*

*Somehow, then, God must contrive to break through those routines of ours...that is a kind of threatening line!*

*“One thing only need be of great concern to us in all this seeming upheaval and catastrophe: to be faithful to God and to look to him in everything, confident of his love and constancy, aware that this world and this new order was not our lasting city any more than the previous one had been, and **striving always to know his will and to do it each day of our lives.**”*

### **2. What to do when reality doesn’t meet our expectations**

*“Things here were not at all as we had envisioned them, and we were not at all equipped to face things as we found them. So much for our hopes, our expectations, our dreams, our convictions, above all, our enthusiasm!”*

He writes, *“Although our situation may have been somewhat unique, the temptation itself was not. It is the same temptation faced by everyone who has followed a call and found that the realities of life were nothing like the expectations he had.”*

He quotes how this temptation is felt and expressed by people:

*“This life is not what I thought it would be. This is not what I bargained for. It is not at all what I wanted, either. I never thought it would be like this. I simply cannot stand it, and I will not stay. I will not serve.”*

**\*\***This is the point I really want to make today – we arrive at this point of frustration when reality does not live up to our expectations. And it is easy in that moment to cast around for blame, to scapegoat, to complain, to look at others who don’t live up to our expectations – and led by the evil one we focus our attention on other people and we are blind to what God is expecting of us in this present reality, in the actual circumstances and situation we are living in.**\*\***

He didn’t, he writes:

*“And then one day, it dawned on us. God granted us the grace to see...the answer to our temptation.”*

*“Our whole purpose [in Russia] -- as indeed in our whole lives -- was to do the will of God. Not the will of God as we might wish it...or as we thought in our poor human wisdom it ought to be. But rather the will of God as God envisioned it and revealed it to us each day...His will for us was the 24 hours of each day: the people, the places, the circumstances he set before us in that time.”*

*“Our dilemma (in the logging camp) came from our frustration at not being able to do what we thought the will of God ought to be in this situation, at our inability to work as we thought God would surely want us to work, instead of accepting the situation itself as his will.”*

*Accepting the situation itself as his will.* That’s pretty powerful and life-changing, because that means that this situation is what God wants for me and I need to discover how he wants me to act, what he wants me to do right now.

### **3. “What each man can change, first of all, is himself.”**

Degrading, humiliating, unjust – helpless

*“No situation is ever without its worth and purpose in God's Providence. It is a very human temptation to feel frustrated by circumstances, to feel overwhelmed and helpless in the face of the established order, whether that order is an NKVD prison, or the whole Soviet system, or the ‘status quo’... or the whole rotten oppressive world!”*

*“He may not be able to change the ‘system’, anymore that I could change conditions in that prison, but he is not for that reason excused from acting at all. Many men feel frustrated, or disappointed, or even defeated, when they find themselves face to face with a situation or an evil they cannot do much about ...(God) does expect him, though, to act as he would have him act in the circumstances ordained by his will and his Providence nor will God's grace be lacking to help him act.”*

*“He was asking me to forget about my ‘powerlessness’ against the ‘system’, and to look instead to the immediate needs of those around me, this day, in order that I might do everything that it was in my power to do by prayer and example. That was all he was asking of me or expecting of me. It was all I had to do, but it was plenty - and it could not be done while I sat feeling sorry for myself.”*