



DIVINE INFANT PARISH

6658 Bilberry Drive, Orleans

**YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED
DIVINE MERCY
CENACLE CONFERENCE**

Saturday, November 3rd at 12:30 pm.

Presentation on Divine Mercy by Father Dan Dubroy

Group discussion of the main theme

Adoration, Divine Mercy Chaplet and Confession

Pot-luck supper after the 5:00 pm mass in the parish hall

RSVP

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DIVINE INFANT PARISH DIVINE MERCY CENACLE

QUARTERLY CONFERENCE REPORT

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3rd 2018

INTRODUCTION

The inaugural Divine Mercy Conference at Divine Infant Parish in Orleans, Ontario took place on Saturday, November 3rd 2018. The conference was organized, with the blessing of Father Waldemar Podlasz, in response to the expressed desire of the members of the four Divine Mercy cenacles at the Parish who meet weekly to follow a guided study program of readings, prayer and worship and the recitation of the Divine Mercy Chaplet. The selected readings are drawn from the Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, Scripture and the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church.

Members of all four cenacles wished to have an opportunity to more fully interact with their fellow members from the other three cenacles and in addition, they wished to have more time to explore certain weekly topics. The conference was built on this premise, and the theme – Suffering - was chosen for this inaugural conference. Forty-seven people attended; some did not belong to a Divine Mercy cenacle and included participants from other parishes and faith communities.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME

An eight-hour programme was developed to include a one-hour presentation, a question and answer session followed by a table top brainstorming of three specifically chosen questions that further explored the theme of the presentation. This was followed by a special time dedicated to the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and praying the Chaplet, the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist. These more formal and spiritual aspects of the conference were followed by a light-hearted evening potluck dinner.

Father Dan Dubroy graciously gave of his time to be the inaugural presenter. His talk on suffering and diminishment was deeply thought-provoking and generated much discussion afterwards. Father Dan's inspirational message resulted in him remaining at Divine Infant for over two hours as participants partook of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

All the participants were involved with the set up and take down of the parish hall and the preparation and serving of the afternoon refreshment breaks and the evening potluck dinner. Six participants, members of different cenacles, sat at each table. One filled the role of presenter/leader and another contributed to the table group as the

scribe to answer three questions that were directly aligned to Father Dan's presentation and to the Cenacle formation manuals. Following a break, each leader presented the results of his or her table's discussion to the whole group. Participants were encouraged to view the positive aspects of suffering as redemptive or restorative opportunities. The following paragraphs present those results in their entirety as identified by each of the table groups.

DISCUSSION

WHAT ARE WAYS IN WHICH WE SUFFER?

Spiritual¹ : spiritual dryness, spiritual darkness, doubt, false pride, false piety, attacks from the devil, feeling/being lost, lack of discernment, performance anxiety, persecution for beliefs, drought or desolation, loss of faith of our loved ones/the pain of parents whose children have moved away from the Church, loss of Christian values, being ridiculed/questioned/derided/condescended to because you believe in God, Jesus and Mary, abortion, loneliness, rejection, feeling alone, distracted, in a desert

Physical : pain, illness, disabilities, injuries, ageing, lust, gluttony/addictions, laziness, exhaustion/burnout this can lead to mental suffering, financial suffering, being overworked, abortion,

Emotional : loss of independence, loss of a loved one², self-harming, misunderstanding by the world at large/sense of ostracization, rejection by people with opposing/opposite values, broken relationships in the family, feeling alone, anxiety³

Mental : mentally challenged children, anxiety, depression, this can lead to physical suffering

Psychological : elder care worries, dementia, feelings of inadequacy and not being loved, disappointments, depression, anxiety, fear, pride/humiliation, self-hate, isolation/loneliness, feeling misunderstood, being falsely accused, envy

Financial : losses experienced, it is a constant struggle, gambling addiction, living in a highly litigious world where people sue others over anything

Timing is not right – patience, we suffer because we may not fit in our life

¹ By offering our suffering to Christ on the Cross, our suffering is not wasted.

² It was noted that faith has increased because friends have witnessed receiving help through the death of a loved one.

³ When we can feel God's presence, our dependence and trust in God increases

Feeling helpless – not being able to help in a situation

Our suffering may help someone else's suffering

Allow our suffering to help us grow

WHAT ARE SIGNS OF DIMINISHMENT IN OUR DAILY LIFE?

Criticizing others, judging others, suing/taking people to court, anger towards each other, overeating, pornography, homosexuality, addiction to gambling/material things, abortion, isolation/depression, lack of communication, negativity, gossiping, bullying, frustration, humiliation, indifference, selfishness, control, self-inflicted hurt, low self-esteem, sexual disorientation, withdrawal or anger by a young or old person being bullied, viewing ourselves against standards, making ourselves look better at the cost/expense of others, self-effacing pride, playing the martyr, terrorism, political turmoil, rioting, alcoholism, always trying to please, obsessive compulsive disorder, trying to be perfect, attempting suicide, violence towards children, violence towards animals, jealousy, sadness, loss of self-confidence, disappointment, feeling rejected, withdrawal, shutting down, temptation (giving in to increasing unhealthy habits), weight gain, weight loss, lack of hygiene, change in appearance – hair colour, tattoos, piercing, clothing choices, wearing black or dark sombre colours, indifference, when we let go or forget God's love for us and our dignity through Him. Bruised egos, not being acknowledged for our good works, not being recognized, feeling invisible, solitude and isolation.

Positive aspects are when we are no longer affected by the slings and arrows of others, can learn humility and use the opportunity to practice being merciful and non-judgmental.

HOW CAN SAINT FAUSTINA'S SUFFERING HELP US WITH OUR OWN SENSE OF DIMINISHMENT?

By offering our own suffering. As a gift. To alleviate or forgive another's suffering or transgression.

Saint Faustina was given a grace that we have a share in. We can pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet for those whose suffering can be redemptive. By emulating Saint Faustina overcoming her suffering by trusting in Jesus. By praying for those who have diminished you and those you have diminished. By teaching us to pray ***O Blood and Water which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus, as a fount of mercy for us, I trust in You*** three times. Knowing that Saint Faustina is always listening to us. We have trust in Jesus. We can trust in Jesus. We have been given the grace to know that we have access to Him and God our Father's mercy.

Showing acceptance. By striving to imitate saints. By having a better knowledge of the redeeming value and power of suffering. By instilling

hope that suffering will lead to joy and peace that can only come from God. By being an ideal example of transforming suffering into joy. So study her Diary!

By showing the power of surrender (to God's Holy will). By trusting God. By acceptance of her (our) situation. Faith (Jesus, we trust in Thee). Humility. By being a part of God's redemptive plan (redemptive suffering). By reading her Diary!

As a result of embracing our suffering; and by embracing it, we can use it in a positive way by uniting our suffering to Christ. By understanding what real (pure) love is – that is, suffering for the love of others.

By being a role model of great suffering. She never lost sight of the prize. She took on others' suffering so the grace flows back to them through her suffering. Reading the Diary! It gives encouragement. Her example of great surrender helps us do the same. Her model of never feeling alone because she understood Christ is always with us in our suffering. By taking it / using it as an opportunity to be in Christ's presence and united to His Passion.

Again, she was a role model. Remembering that she was a very simple person, she was very humble and patient. She surrendered all to Jesus, she gave Him her complete trust. **She had hope and trust that her suffering had a purpose which was to save souls.** She showed that our weakness is God's power in us. She spread the message of Divine Mercy in our broken world and showed us how to not feel rejected personally by the world not accepting this message.

CONCLUSION

The aspects of suffering and diminishment were expertly presented by Father Dan and deeply explored by every person in attendance. The discussions focused on both the intrapersonal aspects of suffering and diminishment and then extended to the repercussions extending to conflicts and hurt in the family, our communities and beyond to the whole world. (..... have mercy on us, and on the whole world....)

We at Divine Infant, feel privileged and very blessed to have been able to host this inaugural conference. We feel that the large number of participants, along with their desire to learn more and then apply aspects of the message of Divine Mercy, bodes well for not only our parish, but the Archdiocese of Ottawa and even beyond ecumenical and national borders. This is an exciting time to be Apostles of Divine Mercy and we embrace the opportunities we will have to host future conferences and fully explore the messages given to us through our beloved Saint Sister Faustina. To that end, the next conference is scheduled to take place at Divine Infant Parish, once again, on Saturday

February 23rd 2019 from 1 to 8 p.m. As the Lenten season will begin soon afterward on March 6th, we are proposing as our theme *Performing corporal acts of mercy as living examples of the Beatitudes. How we, as apostles of Divine Mercy, can help lessen Christ's burden on his Way to the Cross.*

References:

1. Cenacle Formation Manual 3, Suffering, pages 15-20
2. Diary, Entry 57, "*Suffering is a great grace. Through suffering the soul becomes like the Saviour, in suffering love becomes crystallized; the greater the suffering, the purer the love.*"