



The Consecration of the Family to the Divine Mercy

The Story of Our Lady's Call to Her Priest

BY FR. DERMOT ROACHE, SMA

I was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY. I come from a very strong Catholic family that live their faith and are outspoken and open with their faith. At the dinner table, we often speak about God without resistance or resentment from members. What we have as a family was and remains unique in our world today.

Our faith has always been nourished because it is a lived faith. We practice our faith and participate weekly in Holy Mass. Some family members have always been daily communicants. I fondly recall praying the Rosary every night as a family.

I didn't realize until I was about 17 that the rest of the world didn't exactly live the same way as me! However, this reality gave me opportunity to reflect more deeply on the imperative nature in which my parents and grandparents gave regarding a living and personal relationship with God. The root of my faith in God; the root of my vocation comes from the lived and practiced faith of my both grandparents and my mother and father. They believe what they practice. They understood its lasting effects. They knew it was the only thing that would carry us through

life. My mother and father have always said that at the end of the day, no matter how you look at it, you have to answer to God. As you can see, God has always been first in our home. Praying the Rosary as a family would be "good fun" at times. Imagine three generations, reciting the pray with different rhythms and speeds united with one big heart of love. As children, naturally one would get the odd giggle and at times burst into laughter. This would be followed by the mother shouting and then falling back into formation with the next 'Hail Mary.'

Our friends would arrive at our house, ringing the doorbell, anticipating an evening out. We would be praying the rosary at this time and my grandmother, without missing a beat, would simply stand up, open the door (still saying the Rosary) and say, "**Hi dear, either you're in or you're out. If you're in, you're on your knees.**" It was an interesting experience because no one was ever exempt from the prayer life of the family!

A Family of Prayer

What I discovered was that despite any problems we had within the family, the very fact that we were

a family of prayer, the Lord gave graces of peace and unity that held us together. Despite problems, we were never fully torn apart because that living prayer, that lived belief in Jesus and Mary and the merciful God has kept us very close together. To this day we family members might be living in different countries and US cities, but we are extremely close. We pray for one another and we guide one another.

In addition to this strong Catholic background, I had twelve years of Catholic education including college. I earned a BA in English from St. Joseph College in Brooklyn NY and began teaching intermediate level (6th, 7th, and 8th graders) in the New York City public school system. It was during this time, I had been given an opportunity to go as a pilgrim to Medjugorje. Interestingly, several months before my pilgrimage, I had been receiving a monthly Catholic pilgrimage magazine. The front cover headline was Medjugorje specials. This was the case month after month.

Answering the Call from Our Lady

I eventually chose to go on pilgrimage to Medjugorje in 1996

because I had a call to go. As a child, I had a unique personal relationship with the Blessed Mother. I always loved her. I used to informally talk to her in prayer.

I went on pilgrimage for my family; just as a believer. I went to meet our Mother and ask for help and to intervene in my intentions. I had invited other people to join me, but they thought I was taking a risk going to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the middle of a war. I decided to go anyway.

I joined a group and we departed from JFK. I will never forget my first experience on the Dalmatian coastline and witnessing burnt out buildings, and forests that were completely destroyed. As we went further inland I couldn't help but stare horrifically at the shrapnel spewn across homes and buildings surrounding the piazzas. It was my first time seeing war right in front of my face. Yet, we pilgrims continued praying on the bus until we reached the village.

When we entered the valley coming into the village of Medjugorje, there was a sense of peace that filled the bus. I'll even say it was a tangible peace. There was something so real about it. For years, I have described my first experience in Medjugorje as a piece of Heaven that physically came to earth. Sitting on the bus, feeling this extraordinary peace, I then realized I had arrived to a very special place. I had known about the story of Medjugorje since the 1980's. I have never been curious about the incidentals, or the supernatural. They don't impress me. I came as a pilgrim determined to pray for others and to ask the Mother of God's help with my own intentions.

In the course of that pilgrimage week, I really sensed the Blessed Mother's presence. I really sensed



the presence of the Holy Spirit. It's not easy to describe in words, but I'm sure many people will agree that when a person visits Medjugorje there is something about it that you can just never put into words. I do know however, from my profound experience in Medjugorje that my vocation to the priesthood was born. I know now that the Mother of God was calling me to serve the Church in the priesthood. I could see that more clearly as the years went on.

When I returned home from Medjugorje, I began a struggle between two goods: following the path of getting married, having a career and family, which was the beautiful and noble vocation I desired, and now the possibility of joining the priesthood. I never deeply thought about the priesthood. But there was now no denying that the call was implanted in my heart. For quite some time I struggled with this call. I had to seek further help. I then began having a spiritual director.

The Power of the Blessed Sacrament

The first fruit of Medjugorje for me was the seed planted for my priestly vocation. The second fruit was falling in love with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Less than two weeks after returning from the pilgrimage, I found a chapel of perpetual adoration and I would find myself there night after night after night after night. Going out with the friends didn't

matter anymore. **It was there before the Blessed Sacrament that I began to discover clarity.** The fork in the road was there: married life or the priesthood, and it became more and more clear. I would kneel in front of my God and say "What am I to do? Give me an answer." I eventually chose the priesthood and joined the Society of African Missions (SMA Fathers).

The Society of African Missions is a missionary institute founded in 1856 by French Bishop Marion de Bréssillac. Pope Pius IX charged de Bréssillac with the task of West African region beginning with Freetown in Sierra Leone. In the 19th century, little was known about Africa including the vast climates. As a result, our founder and his newly appointed priests all died from yellow fever 6 weeks after arriving to Freetown. But to God be all praise! 158 years later, we are 1000 men strong serving in the rural areas of the African continent carrying the Gospel message to the poorest of the poor.

To return to my journey - I spent my years in seminary formation, and I gained strength in my love for the priesthood. The seed was planted in Medjugorje and started to germinate in my years of formation. My years in seminary were exciting. I had a chance to travel to different countries in Africa. I was ordained in Nairobi, Kenya and remained continued to work there afterward.

Over the years, I realized that mission life wasn't romantic; it was a very different reality. The Africa we see on TV with war sometimes disheveled people are false and it gives a negative view of the situation. On the contrary, in the midst of their hardships they exude a joy, a hope and a firm trust in the Living God. The African people are most

impressive. They taught me more than I could ever give them. They have so much to teach the world. They are dealing with many of the same problems we are dealing with, but in their own culture.

I later took an assignment in South Africa. I worked 90 miles off the border of Botswana in a very rural place. The SMA Fathers charism is primary evangelization. Primary evangelization is when people who have never heard Jesus Christ's gospel before hear it for the first time. I was in a place where there was very little of anything. What I discovered was when you work in villages and in the bush area you always find some sort of simplicity and unity. However, where I was living in South Africa, all of the above was lacking. Even though we were out in a very rural village, you could still see the effects of the brutal post-apartheid world. Apartheid was a fascist system which legalized the separation of the races. The whites had supremacy, the ex-pats had limited rights and the black South Africans were deprived of most things in their own nation. The moral fiber of South Africa was stripped. South Africa is rich in natural resources. Thus the economy of the mines split up families: husbands and wives, who had no choice but to seek work in different parts of the country. A series of moral deteriorations crept into the already corrupt legal system. There was an increase of substance abuse. Infidelity brought on AIDS. AIDS spread and many victims were women, who were also mothers. The mothers were then giving birth to children. There were single and double parent orphans everywhere.

I was assigned to a parish that had been established for many years. Attached to the parish there were 14 mission outstations that were not growing. There was so much

dysfunctionality evident. The family system was disintegrating. I was blessed to work on the mission with a fine Irish SMA priest, Fr. Freddy Warner. Freddy was well seasoned veteran. He and I **would spend an hour every night in adoration.**

We shared the same concerns for the family situations in the parish and began to speak about what we could do for these families because no matter what we tried we couldn't get the people into the churches and we couldn't get the young ones to join any youth groups. It was just completely corrupted.

Divine Mercy – “The New Sacred Heart”

He and I shared our Irish tradition of enthroning and consecrating the family to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

If you enter most Irish homes you usually find an image of the Sacred Heart on the wall. At the bottom of the image one will often find the Family name with the listing of the mother and father and their children indicating that they have been enthroned and consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and there is a space provided for the priest witness. **We tried to introduce this devotion to the parish, presenting the Image of the Sacred Heart to them but it didn't move them. Fr. Freddy and I both have great devotion to the Divine Mercy and we decided to try presenting the parish with “the new Sacred Heart.” I recall introducing the image of the Divine Mercy on the altar and there was a great response.**

For me as a young priest, a lot of things are exciting. I wanted to make zealous moves to get things done. Fr. Freddy and I originally

developed a program of trying to work with families with a small prayer of consecration. It was not time. It didn't work. In the meantime, Fr. Freddy returned home on a compassion leave to care for his aging parents. The parish was entrusted to me for the time being. The workload builds and you quickly learn that you are not in control. I spent more and more time before



the Blessed Sacrament, because that is where all my answers are given, my confusion is cleared, and where I get my energy. I began to ask the Lord “Now that Fr. Freddy is gone, what do we do here with the family situation?” All I can remember is that I received an understanding while praying before the Blessed Sacrament: **“Give My Mercy to the families.” It was very clear. I said, “I will.” I called in the parish council and said the only way I can give you a better understanding about the Divine Mercy is if you let me into your homes. I explained what the enthronement would be and how it would bring healing to their brokenness. They took it on board faster than I imagined.**

I began to draft the consecration prayer and enthronement booklet. **I would always draft it in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Little by little, the Lord gave me the structure to follow.** A priest or

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deacon should be present for the family enthronement because it is a powerful sign when your home is consecrated by the ordained. The actual enthronement format that was composed invites the family to physically gather around the Divine Mercy Image. The gesture shows that Jesus is the center of our lives. By that gesture the families then set their families apart, giving them back to God placing them at the throne of His Mercy. I began to go from home to home in the hamlets joined with who pray in solidarity. The word got around and it the apostolate took off like wildfire. In the middle of all my parish work, I suddenly had an extra ministry of consecrating and enthroning families to the Divine Mercy. Before I was recalled to Boston, a little fewer than 2,000 families were enthroned to the Divine Mercy.

Every Priest Should Have a Holy Hour

I believe that Our Lady personally called me in Medjugorje to be a priest. **She knows the Church needs priests right now, courageous and prayerful men of a new generation. She knows the Church needs men who are united with Her Son. One of the ways to unite with Jesus is through the Holy Hour. Every priest should have a daily Holy**

Hour. When we spend time with Jesus in Holy Hour, our priesthood takes on more meaning. I quote Dominican Jean Baptiste Lacodaire who said that the priest is *“to live in the midst of the world with no desire for its pleasures; to be a member of every family, yet belonging to none; to share all sufferings; to penetrate all secrets, to heal all wounds; to daily go from men to God to offer Him their homage and petitions; to return from God to men to bring them His pardon and hope.”* It is in my daily holy hour that I understand in greater depth this quote from Lacodaire. What a gift the priesthood is! A fruit of my priesthood has begun taking shape and in extraordinary ways bearing the fruits that the Dominican priest shares.

In 2010 I was assigned back home in the United States. While home, I had participated at a Divine Mercy Cenacle showing the prayer and enthronement used in South Africa to a priest friend of mine who felt that the prayer warranted publication. I requested an imprimatur. In August 2013, I was granted a Nihil Obstat and an imprimatur for this Consecration of the Family to the Divine Mercy. I then realized it was time, God’s time to continue the mission to **“give the families My Mercy.”** Within six months, the distribution of this prayer has gone into the hundreds of thousands, on a grass roots level. By request, it has been translated into many languages such as Spanish, Italian, Polish, Portuguese and French. I began to realize that the family’s call for Mercy which took place in South Africa was now germinating in the United States.

Now is the Time for the Consecration of the Family to the Divine Mercy

It is a time of mercy for the families of the world. I am beginning to understand and, after pondering these things, I am convinced that the Divine Mercy for families is one of the foundations to the Divine Mercy devotion itself. Without the family we do not have hope. The family is society; the family is the Church. The family is the future which is under threat and division. Families today are in desperate need of God’s mercy. I’ve discovered that when I recommended this consecration prayer to any family anywhere in the world, something takes place during that prayer. The power Holy Spirit comes down. I’ve witnessed many tears; those are the tears of healing. It is because the prayer is a generational healing prayer. God’s mercy has no boundaries. God’s mercy has no time. The prayer encompasses the abandonment of our families, past, present, and future into the control and care of God’s infinite mercy.

This is extraordinary because this is exactly what happened at the passion, death, and resurrection of Our Lord. He took everything and everyone from the beginning of time to the end of time, and He reconciled them to Himself. So when we take our families and we commend them to God’s Divine Mercy and we consecrate them, we set them aside and say **“Lord I place them into your wounds and into your merciful heart.”** He takes our families and it’s like Baptism, unless we freely decide to reject Him, we remain in His Heart forever. He will never let us go. By life’s circumstances, our families might come right to the edge of death or disaster, but He will never let you go. His Mercy far surpasses any sin,



any disease, any threat disaster or wrongdoing we may cause in life. Families need to know this. No sin or darkness is greater than His Mercy! I've seen mothers and fathers in churches weep and they say, "Do you know about my children?" Yes, we all know it. **Every parent is dealing with family problems.** But no problem, heartache or sadness is greater than His Divine Mercy.

One of the fruits of my priesthood has opened up to something in which I have no control over, but God is using me for something in His plan for the family. I don't like to say no to God and I believe that He is using my constant yes in an extraordinary way. It comes at a cost I must add. The Act of Consecration of the Family to the Divine Mercy is something that I know has been in His mind a long time. For whatever His wisdom, He called me on pilgrimage to Medjugorje in order to take on an invitation to the priesthood. **For whatever Her wisdom, Blessed Mother of Mercy also saw something of value in this "nobody" from Brooklyn.** I'm very humbled at the magnificence of God's work and how God has used my priesthood.

A Prayer of Healing for Generations

Since the act of consecration has been introduced, I've received testimony about families that have begun to reconcile with one another and about marriages in which spouses are considering appropriate communication again. I know of a few children that have requested to enter rehab programs. Families are continuing to be healed. Many families have decided to pray the consecration prayer every day. It strengthens them in the daily task families experience each day. **God's power is working; He has given**

a prayer for generational healing. Perhaps a long deceased family member is the cause of something difficult happening now, (perhaps by a curse or a poor legacy passed down) this can be healed so that wound will not continue to remain open from generation to the next. God's mercy just continues to flow over.

Many have asked how this Enthronement of the Divine Mercy is different from the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart. **Jesus said to St. Faustina "I have chosen you to be my apostle for the last times." The Sacred Heart of Jesus is still equally powerful, but when He decided to give the Image of the Divine Mercy to the world, He was ushering in an era of mercy; an era that is changing the destiny of humankind. Look at our world. Every family screams for mercy.** When Jesus asked for the image to be painted, no matter how insufficient it was in St. Faustina's eyes, the Lord accepted it. **Jesus talks about the image being miraculous and powerful. He placed a condition of our trust attached to the miraculous Image.**

We are asked to trust in His Mercy in these troubled times.

Enthronement and Consecration to Divine Mercy

I think it's important here to perhaps explain to our readers what we actually mean by consecration. This is a crucial point in this article and for this particular apostolate because of



the nature of consecration, which is of God, for God, and to God. When we consecrate something or someone to God, it has lasting power.

When the great St. Louis de Montfort was teaching the secret of perfection by means of a consecration to Jesus through Mary he best explained what a consecration is. **Consecration is giving oneself, fully and completely to God, without conditions, without strings, without reservation.** The Church has been practicing this gesture of love for centuries. She has consecrated churches, nations and people to Jesus and Mary in various ways. This surrender opens new avenues for spiritual growth and healing.

Consecration Marks a New Beginning

When we consecrate our families to The Divine Mercy in these last times we do the same. We are giving our families back to God, freely of our own will, without conditions, without strings without reservation. Human life is a gift from God. Family is a gift from God. We in turn return our families (whether wounded or united), in total surrender to the will of Jesus' Mercy, to be used daily for His purpose. It entails surrendering everything



– the good and bad. We surrender our family sufferings, joys, worries, divisions and thanksgivings even for those in family we never met so His Mercy may take them.

The consecration marks a new beginning, a fresh start in our life of love with Jesus, for each of us is called to His love.

It is here I'd like to speak about that new beginning. I have witnessed the power of the Mercy of Jesus Christ through The Divine Mercy in this Act of Consecration in both ordinary as well as extraordinary ways. This is the era of mercy in the world and therefore He will manifest His Mercy in marvelous ways.

I Began to See Healing

When the parishioners and villagers in my parish in South Africa, who were so freely drawn to The Divine Mercy Image and devotion, answered my request to visit their homes for an enthronement and consecration, I began to see healing before my very eyes. It became quite expressive. I often would see many tears flow during the time we would pray the enthronement of consecration together and I realized that they

were tears of healing. I have heard families crying outward prayers verbally expressed so candidly, without reserve, calling upon The Divine Mercy to heal any curses that their ancestors brought upon their families, and the current wounds that have been incurred in

recent times. Often they would pray for their children and grandchildren and children to come that they would live a better South Africa.

I have also noticed a pattern when we gather as families wholeheartedly entrusting them to His Mercy, a profound peace comes down upon the members of the household; an indescribable yet recognizable presence of the Holy Spirit endowing His numerous gifts of peace, hope, mercy, healing, renewal and restoration. The more it happened the more convinced I became that this prayer Jesus gave me is the right prayer at the right time. Begin to heal the heart of society, the family, and we will begin to heal the world.

Victim of AIDS and Divine Mercy

I return to that moment marked with a new beginning. I would like to share with you a story of extraordinary Mercy. Lebu was a young mother and widow of four children. Her husband had died three years before. Lebu, in order to support her children, began working the Johannesburg streets in the sex industry. Her children stayed home in the village with the grandmother.

Ause (Grandma) Bernie requested that I come to consecrate and enthrone her home and family to The Divine Mercy. Ause Bernie is a woman of solid trust in the Lord. Following normal procedure, I prayed along with many of her neighbors who joined in for Ause Bernie's family.

It is during times such as these that I learn much about real family issues as some family members candidly present all their needs to the Lord. Remember, this is a consecration without reserve, without conditions, without holding anything back. It was here I learned about her daughter Lebu. Ause Bernie was the typical South African grandmother who was either widowed or separated raising grandchildren and usually the survivor of at least one child to AIDS. Ause Bernie buried two children to this disease. **So, after we prayed the consecration of the family with her neighbors, I recall many, many tears flowed and, in typical South African fashion the people began to sing with their famous haunting magnetic melodies as a sign of their solidarity with their sister in Christ. For me, it was marking a new beginning. Another family was crossing the threshold of Hope and the rays pouring from our Lord's merciful heart began to show light where there was darkness.**

Lebu had AIDS. Her husband had died from the very same. South Africa is a nation riddled with this pandemic claiming the lives of millions. It has shredded the very essence of family life and structure. Seven months after consecrating Ause Bernie's family, Lebu returned home to die. She was bitter. She was almost impossible to talk to. She was deeply wounded. She wanted nothing to do with life, with God, with anything. She lost all hope. After several futile

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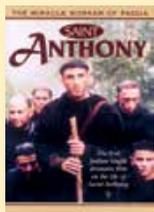


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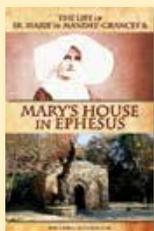


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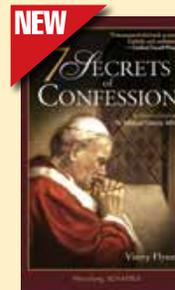


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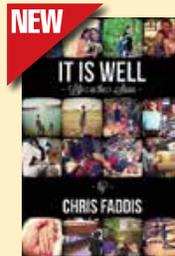


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attempts on my behalf to intervene in her suffering, Lebu began to deteriorate rapidly.

Ause Bernie handled the situation with the upmost dignity. She has full trust in the Lord. She said to me, **“Rra” (Father), “my God is a merciful God and he will not forsake me nor my offspring. I have placed the image of The Divine Mercy at the foot of the bed so when she wakes the first thing she sees is our Lord reaching out to her.”** I was amazed that such faith could still be so solid knowing that this is the third child she will be burying from AIDS. I instructed Bernie, the women of the parish and family members to begin a constant prayer chain of the Chaplet of The Divine Mercy over Lebu as she was dying in the bed. Lebu went into a coma. The family and I kept praying. Moments before Lebu took her last breath, we all experienced The Divine Mercy enter the room in a beautiful way. Lebu began to become agitated in the bed and suddenly exhaled and said, “Rra, now I can go home.” She closed her eyes and died.

Lebu was not abandoned by God. It was by His Mercy that in her last breath she let go of her bitterness, anger and despair which she had held onto for many years. I then recognized that the consecration prayer of the family to The Divine Mercy is always going to bear fruit; never on our time but on His.

I have been blessed in America to witness through this same consecration and enthronement prayer the healing of marriages and family relationships. There have been spouses that were not willing to communicate that suddenly had an urge to start fresh once more. Relationships between siblings and/or parents and children have recommenced to open the door to dialogue and reconciliation. For me, that is huge. As we know, divorce, drugs, alcoholism and addictions of all sorts have torn families asunder. And the underlying issue is the lack of understanding, trust, and true love. And when these lacking elements are recognized, anything is possible. It may not fully change this situation

but it changes how people work the situation together. There is strength in numbers. When an individual realizes how merciful Jesus Christ is, everything will transform quickly.

I am encouraging anyone reading this article to get on board and spread this message. Yes, the prayer is powerful, yes the words are anointed, yes I received the words in a process kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament, but **it is not about me at all. It is about HIM.** We as a Church need to take part in all levels of evangelization. I request that the priests and laity make the effort to support what is known now as **Family Divine Mercy** and spread His message of Mercy to all the families of the world and give them a solid hope in a world that offers none.

In a matter of months over 200,000 consecration prayer cards and enthronements have been distributed in several languages. As a result a group of laity in Massachusetts are in the process of founding **Family Divine Mercy**, a non-profit entity with a mission to promote the message of The Divine Mercy in a specific way – for the families around the world. Help them to help you and the families of the world. God bless you.

Act of Consecration of the Family to the Divine Mercy

Q Jesus, you showed us your infinite compassionate love by exhausting the very last drop of blood and water from your body. From this day forward, with full confidence, we entrust our families to your Divine Mercy. We abandon our past, our present, and our future. We place into your wounds all of our wounds which are caused by lack of love, understanding, and trust. Jesus, expel Satan and all evil from our families, free us from the consequence of sin and protect us from further harm. Heal our wounds. May our families learn to venerate your Divine Image that they will never perish but experience your loving mercy. Amen.

To order prayer cards contact:

Family Divine Mercy

P.O. Box 2511

Westwood, MA 02090

www.familydivinemeracy.org

familydivinemeracy@verizon.net