

grievous sins, even though they were as red as scarlet in their enormity and as numerous as the grains of sands on the sea shore. "Whatever," said Christ to his ministers, "you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Mathew xviii : 8.) And again, "As the Father hath sent me I send you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them : and whose sins you shall retain they are retained." (St. John xx. : 23.) As often as men sin, and however grievous and heinous and numerous their sins may be, so often they may apply to this sacred tribunal of mercy, and its pardoning power forgives always with a divine and perfect absolution. For all transgressions, for all post-baptismal sins whatsoever, for all the sad long catalogue of grievous transgressions that outrage God and ruin man there is but one condition of pardon required, and that is sincere sorrow and the firm resolve to sin no more, and then the absolution imparted is certain in its effects, is full and complete. "And now," as Cardinal Manning beautifully says, "this Sacrament of the love of Jesus to many is necessary, and to all is a fountain of grace. To those who after Baptism have fallen into mortal sin it is necessary. No other Sacrament of life remains to them ; no other means of rising from the death of sin to the life of justice is ordained. They cannot raise themselves to life again. The charity of God has departed from them, and the Holy Ghost has withdrawn His habitual grace. The interior acts of their souls are dead. Their good actions have no power of merit. One act of mortal sin has destroyed all. One such sin in youth has cankered the root of a long life, or one such sin has shattered all the growth and fruit of the longest obedience. If they so die they are lost, and lost forever. To die out of the love of God is eternal death. Nor shall they be revived again except only by this second Sacrament of the dead. If they come with the sorrow of faith and hope, even though they have not charity, the compassion of Jesus will give them a full forgiveness and breathe into them the breath of life once more."

Let us then cherish a deep, abiding devotion for this Sacrament of the Divine Mercy, and let us approach it frequently