

Here is a little American history: At the end of the American Civil War, after General Lee's surrender, President Lincoln spoke to a large crowd from the balcony of the White House. He was to tell the crowd about the policy he had in mind for the South. Senator Harlan asked, "What shall we do with the rebels?"

The vindictive crowd shouted back, "Hang them!" Tad, the President's eleven year old son, then turned to his father and said, "No, no, Papa. Not hang them. Hang on to them!" "That's it!" replied Lincoln joyfully. "Tad has it. We must hang on to them!"

Tad must have acquired his compassionate spirit from his father. When pressed in how in intended to treat the south, Lincoln said: "I shall treat them as if they had never been away."

Many people are in the hanging business. They would rather hang someone for whatever they consider to be wrong in their lives rather than to hang on to them and try to help them.

This weekend we celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday. Jesus is our ultimate example of demonstrating love and mercy.

The gospel is filled with episodes of Jesus extending mercy on to the worst of sinners.

The Lord even called known sinners, like Matthew, to be his apostle. To the woman caught in adultery, Jesus not only saved her from being stoned to death, but also saved her soul by telling her to sin no more. In agony while hanging on the cross, Jesus forgave those who were killing him, even making excuses for them, saying "They know not what they do."

What is mercy? Mercy is compassion or forbearance shown towards an offender or one subject to one's power. Charity, clemency, grace and leniency are connected to mercy. However, mercy implies compassion that overrides punishment even when justice calls for it.

Jesus is the Divine Mercy. In St. Maria Faustina's diary entitled *Divine Mercy in My Soul*, our Lord revealed to her: *"I sent prophets wielding thunderbolts to my people. Today I am sending you with my mercy to the people of the whole world. I do not want to punish aching mankind, but I desire to heal it, pressing it to my merciful heart."*

The Message of Divine Mercy is that God is merciful. The Lord wants no one to escape His merciful love. The message of Divine Mercy is that God wants us to turn to Him with trust and repentance. This turning with trust to Him, who is Mercy itself, is the only source of peace for humankind. Imploring God's mercy is the only answer for our troubled world.

President Lincoln showed mercy to the southern rebels, and the United States of America was able to grow from his compassion. Our Lord shows mercy to all of us. We need to receive His mercy and then let it flow through us onto others. Our world will grow from our compassion.