

## **Second Sunday of Easter (or Sunday of Divine Mercy) - Lectionary: 43**

### **Reading 1 - [Acts 2:42-47](#)**

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

**Responsorial Psalm - [Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24](#) R. (1) Give thanks to the LORD for he is good, his love is everlasting.**

### **Reading 2 - [1 Peter 1:3-9](#)**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time. In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

### **Gospel - [John 20:19-31](#)**

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed." Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

**Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your Dearly Beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.**

## The Call to Divine Mercy: Living as Missionary Disciples

**THE FOUNDATION OF MERCY**

**IDENTITY AS "MISSIONARY DISCIPLES"**

Being a witness is a core identity to be lived, not an obligation.

**THE POWER OF "PEACE BE WITH YOU"**

Christ offers peace to heal original sin and empower believers for their mission.

**DIVINE MERCY**

Receiving God's peace to extend it to a broken world.

**MERCY IN ACTION**

**RELATIONAL ACCOMPANIMENT**

Approach others with delicacy to build bridges of friendship rather than barriers.

**FORGIVENESS IS A CHOICE**

Forgiveness is an act of the will that allows God to heal bitterness and revenge.

**THE FOUR PILLARS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE**

**Apostolic Teaching**

**Communal Life**

**Breaking Bread**

**Prayer**

CORPORAL WORKS (PHYSICAL)	SPIRITUAL WORKS (INNER)
Feed the hungry	Comfort the afflicted
Shelter the homeless	Forgive offenses willingly
Visit the sick and imprisoned	Counsel the doubtful

NotebookLM

### Summary

The observance of Divine Mercy Sunday, occurring on the second Sunday of Easter, serves as a pivotal transition where the liturgical message of the Resurrection becomes a personal and moral mandate for the Christian community. The homily defines this day not merely as a celebration of God's forgiveness, but as the foundational moment for the Church's identity as "missionary disciples." Central to this identity is the reception of Christ's peace and the subsequent commission to extend that same mercy to others. The homily emphasizes that a missionary disciple is necessarily a missionary of mercy, manifested through specific spiritual and corporal works of mercy. The ultimate objective of the mission of mercy is to create "bridges of friendship and solidarity in place of barriers." By living lives of integrity, love, and compassion, the community acts as an instrument of reconciliation. The homily concludes that true peace in the world cannot be achieved through political accords alone, which are prone to failure; rather, lasting peace must stem from a "life in Christ" and the extension of God's mercy into the world through the actions of the faithful.

As you know, this 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter is also Divine Mercy Sunday. Our attention is drawn to the mercy of God today, at the end of the Octave of Easter, because it is meant to keep our focus on receiving and responding to Christ's merciful love. The Church links this feast directly to the Easter mystery of Christ's death and resurrection as the perfect manifestation of God's mercy and as a fitting liturgical moment to express our trust in the mercy of God. Think of Divine Mercy Sunday as a celebration where Easter's message that "Christ is risen", specifically becomes personal and moral in a particular way. God forgives, and therefore Christians are called to forgive and practice mercy in daily life.

This is at the heart of that mercy; our embrace of our identity as missionary disciples, missionaries of mercy. Since it is through the Christian community and our witness that people come to know of Jesus'

message of truth and life, love and mercy, and are led to faith. It is not merely an obligation to witness that rests on our shoulders, but it is who we are and therefore it is to be manifested in how we live, and move, and have our being.<sup>1</sup>

We hear how Jesus extended his mercy to his apostles and disciples in the readings proclaimed throughout the Easter Season, exemplified by the mercy we see extended in today's Gospel reading as Jesus says "**Peace be with you**", and most clearly manifested in his interaction with St. Thomas. Although the greeting can be taken as a blessing, echoing the ordinary Jewish greeting, Shalom, or taken to mean that his presence among them brings deep inner peace; It also highlights his mercy for them. The ones who, though they loved him, abandoned him, betrayed him, denied him – just as he knew they would.<sup>2</sup> Jesus knows that they love him and so love the Father who sent him. He also knows that they are wounded by original sin. That they need his mercy if they are to be healed, strengthened, understand, and be able to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit, whom he will send following his ascension.<sup>3</sup>

So today, we focus on that action of mercy between our risen Lord and the Apostles. They were deeply aware of their sins against him and in need of his forgiveness, to be reassured of his love, and for him to ease the suffering of their hearts. He forgives and empowers them. He gives his apostles his same core mission of sharing God's love, mercy, and forgiveness, truly Priests of the most High God. "*As the Father has sent me, so I send you.*" And so the Church of mercy begins its march.

Today's first reading gives us insight into how the Christians lived their new life in Christ, as regards mission, as well. They were still deeply rooted in the worship and prayer life of Israel, but their frequent gathering in the Temple area had several interconnected reasons. They met in the Temple area because they were continuing the established tradition of prayer, using the Temple as the public center for apostolic teaching and Gospel proclamation, and because God's signs and wonders were drawing

---

<sup>1</sup> Acts 17:24-28 "The God who made the world and all that is in it, the Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in sanctuaries made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands because he needs anything. Rather it is he who gives to everyone life and breath and everything. He made from one the whole human race to dwell on the entire surface of the earth, and he fixed the ordered seasons and the boundaries of their regions, so that people might seek God, even perhaps grope for him and find him, though indeed he is not far from any one of us. For 'In him we live and move and have our being,' as even some of your poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.'"

<sup>2</sup> Saint Thomas Aquinas, [Commentary on the Gospel of John Chapters 1–21](#), trans. Fabian R. Larcher, vol. 2, Latin/English Edition of the Works of St. Thomas Aquinas (Steubenville, OH; Green Bay, WI: Emmaus Academic; Aquinas Institute, 2018), 471. **2532**. He greets them with the words, **peace be with you**. It was necessary to say this because their peace was disturbed in many ways. Their peace with God was troubled; they had sinned against him, some by denying him, others by running away: *you will all fall away because of me this night; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered'* (Matt 26:31). To cure this Jesus offers them the peace of reconciliation with God: *we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son* (Rom 5:10), which he accomplished by his suffering. Their peace with themselves was disturbed because they were depressed and hesitant in their faith. And he offers his peace to cure this: *great peace have those who love your law* (Ps 119:165). Their peace with others was disturbed because they were being persecuted by the Jews. And to this he says, **peace be with you**, to counter the persecution of the Jews: **peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you** (John 14:27).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid; 2538. Jesus makes them adequate for their task by giving them the Holy Spirit, God, who has qualified us to be ministers of a New Covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit (2 Cor 3:6). Whence follows, when he had said this, he breathed on them. In this giving of the Spirit, he first grants them a sign of this gift, which is, that he breathed on them. We see something like this in Genesis, when God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (Gen 2:7), namely natural life, which the first man corrupted, but Christ repaired this by giving the Holy Spirit. We should not suppose that this breath of Christ was the Holy Spirit; it was a sign of the Spirit. So Augustine says, in *On the Trinity*: this bodily breath was not the substance of the Holy Spirit, but a fitting sign that the Holy Spirit proceeds not just from the Father but also from the Son. 2539. Note that the Holy Spirit was sent over Christ, first, in the appearance of a dove, at his baptism (John 1:32), and then in the appearance of a cloud, at his transfiguration (Matt 17:5). The reason for this is that the grace of Christ, which is given by the Holy Spirit, was to be distributed to us by being proliferated through the sacraments. Consequently, at Christ's baptism the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove, which is an animal known for its fecundity; through teaching, the Spirit descended in a luminous cloud. That Christ is seen to be a teacher, listen to him (Matt 17:5). The Spirit descended over the apostles the first time through a breath to indicate the proliferation of grace through the sacraments, whose ministers they were. Thus Christ said, whose sins you will forgive, they are forgiven them: go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19). The second time the Spirit descended on them in tongues of fire to indicate the proliferation of grace through teaching; and so we read in Acts that right after they were filled with the Holy Spirit they began to speak (Acts 2:4). 2540. We see the words used when the Spirit was given, receive the Holy Spirit. But did they receive the Holy Spirit then? It seems not, for since Christ had not yet ascended, it was not fitting that he give gifts to us. Indeed, according to Chrysostom, there were some who said that Christ did not give them the Holy Spirit at that time, but prepared them for the future giving of the Spirit at Pentecost. They were brought to this opinion because Daniel could not endure his sight of an angel (Dan 10:8), and so these disciples could not have endured the coming of the Holy Spirit unless they had been prepared. But Chrysostom himself says that the Holy Spirit was given to the disciples, not for all tasks in general, but for a specific task, that is, to forgive sin. Augustine and Gregory say that the Holy Spirit has two precepts of love: love of God and of neighbor. Therefore, the Holy Spirit was given the first time on earth to indicate the precept of the love of neighbor; and the Spirit was given the second time from heaven to indicate the precept of the love of God.

attention and opening hearts—while the community also began forming its own distinct worship life in homes.

We are the Church of Christ that sees those in difficulty, that does not close her eyes, that knows how to look humanity in the face in order to create meaningful relationships, bridges of friendship and solidarity in place of barriers. The face of “*a Church without frontiers*” appears, “*a Church which considers herself mother to all*”<sup>4</sup> that knows how to take the hand of the willing, to raise — not to condemn. Jesus always extends his hand, always tries to raise, to ensure that people may encounter God, heal, and live abundant life in Christ. The Church, through her members accompanies others in this way. Accompaniment characterized by the delicacy with which one approaches the sacred ground of the other, giving the journey a pace that is “*steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life*”.<sup>5</sup>

The Apostles handed on to us the teaching they received from Jesus. Their teachings help us to understand how their mission is our mission, is the mission of Jesus. That we are a missionary Church of Christ. We are those who have come to believe without seeing him. “**Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.**” St. Peter speaks of us when he says,

*“Although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”* And so, “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time.*”

St. Luke, in the first reading, speaks to us of how we are to live this mission. He gives us four pillars of the spiritual life of missionary disciples of Christ. “*They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.*” These four pillars are also the key components of every Eucharistic Celebration for Catholics. “*They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God.*” This is essential if we are to maintain the divine life within us and live lives of faith rooted in that spiritual foundation.

The Church in her teaching in accord with what has been handed down to us in Scripture and Tradition, gives us something to grasp as we consider the myriad ways in which we can be missionaries of mercy. We have two lists of works of mercy which are charitable actions by which you aid your neighbor in their spiritual and bodily needs.

---

<sup>4</sup> Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Apostolic Exhortation (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013), 164. 210. It is essential to draw near to new forms of poverty and vulnerability, in which we are called to recognize the suffering Christ, even if this appears to bring us no tangible and immediate benefits. I think of the homeless, the addicted, refugees, indigenous peoples, the elderly who are increasingly isolated and abandoned, and many others. Migrants present a particular challenge for me, since I am the pastor of a Church without frontiers, a Church which considers herself mother to all. For this reason, I exhort all countries to a generous openness which, rather than fearing the loss of local identity, will prove capable of creating new forms of cultural synthesis. How beautiful are those cities which overcome paralysing mistrust, integrate those who are different and make this very integration a new factor of development! How attractive are those cities which, even in their architectural design, are full of spaces which connect, relate and favour the recognition of others!

<sup>5</sup> 169. In a culture paradoxically suffering from anonymity and at the same time obsessed with the details of other people’s lives, shamelessly given over to morbid curiosity, the Church must look more closely and sympathetically at others whenever necessary. In our world, ordained ministers and other pastoral workers can make present the fragrance of Christ’s closeness and his personal gaze. The Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this “art of accompaniment” which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (cf. Ex 3:5). The pace of this accompaniment must be steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life.

**Corporal works of mercy address bodily necessities. The Church traditionally lists seven:**

Feed the hungry, Give drink to the thirsty, Clothe the naked, Shelter / harbor the homeless, Visit the sick, Ransom the captive / visit those imprisoned, Bury the dead

**Spiritual works of mercy address spiritual needs. The Church also traditionally lists seven:**

Admonish the sinner, Instruct the ignorant, Counsel the doubtful, Comfort the afflicted, Bear wrongs patiently, forgive offenses willingly (forgive injuries), Pray for the living and the dead

To see and know Jesus in our lives is to recognize where he comes to us, and then to be ready for the day-to-day opportunities when we can bring him into the lives of others. We do this by living lives of integrity, of love and compassion, of real justice for all. Whenever we do that, Easter is celebrated and Jesus is alive among us and we can be true to the mission Jesus gave to his disciples to be instruments of reconciliation, to be peacemakers, breaking down walls of hatred, prejudice and fear.

**Glossary of Key Terms**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Accompaniment</b>	A method of journeying with others characterized by delicacy, careful discernment, and a compassionate gaze that encourages growth in the Christian life.
<b>Breaking of the Bread</b>	A reference to the Eucharist and the practice of sharing life and meals together as a community of believers.
<b>Corporal Works of Mercy</b>	Seven charitable actions that address the physical and bodily necessities of others, such as feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and visiting the sick.
<b>Divine Mercy Sunday</b>	The second Sunday of Easter, focused on the personal and moral application of God's forgiveness and the call for Christians to be merciful.
<b>Missionary Disciples</b>	Individuals who, having been formed in the faith by others, now embrace their identity by witnessing to Jesus' message through their lives, words, and relationships.
<b>Octave of Easter</b>	The eight-day period concluding on Divine Mercy Sunday, intended to keep the focus on responding to Christ's merciful love.
<b>Original Sin</b>	The theological concept describing the fundamental "wound" in humanity that necessitates God's mercy for healing and strengthening.
<b>Peace (True Peace)</b>	A state derived from life in Christ and God's mercy; contrasted with mere "accords" between people or tyrants which ultimately fail without conversion.
<b>Sacrament of Reconciliation</b>	The ritual of confession where individuals receive forgiveness, are reconciled to Christ, and are reassured of His love.
<b>Spiritual Works of Mercy</b>	Seven charitable actions that address the spiritual needs of others, such as instructing the ignorant, counseling the doubtful, and bearing wrongs patiently.