



AMDG
SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER
(DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY)
YEAR B, 11TH APRIL 2021



Believers united, heart and soul!

OPENING PRAYER

God of everlasting mercy,
who in the very recurrence of the paschal feast
kindle the faith of the people you have made your own,
increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed,
that all may grasp and rightly understand
in what font they have been washed,
by whose Spirit they have been reborn,
by whose Blood they have been redeemed.

We come together today like the first believers, praying for unity of heart and soul. With our fellow Christians, we celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the Lord of Life!

In the *First Reading*, we hear how belief in the resurrection bears fruit in the lives of the disciples: it brings them together as a community, united in faith and love in action. The witness of the apostles is the cornerstone of growth in the early church.

In the *Second Reading*, however, John needs to remind an early Christian community to value the incarnational nature of Christ, and the importance of a deepening, living faith. This has practical consequences in terms of love of God, and of our fellow human beings. It sometimes makes challenging demands on us.

The *Psalms* is a song of thanksgiving, and forms a grateful prayer that sits easily on the lips of the risen Lord.

The *Gospel* recounts Jesus's appearance to the disciples, who are overjoyed at his presence. They receive through him the gift of the Holy Spirit and are given their mission. A week later, the Lord appears again to the previously absent Thomas, eliciting his magnificent confession: 'My Lord and my God'!

Today, on Divine Mercy Sunday, I pray to the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit, that I may daily surrender to God's mercy.

SECOND READING 1 JOHN 5: 1–6

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten by God; and whoever loves the Father that begot us, loves the child whom God begets. We can be sure that we love God's children if we love God himself, and do what he has commanded us. This is what loving God is – keeping his commandments. And his commandments are not difficult, because anyone who has been begotten by God has already overcome the world. This is the victory over the world – our faith. Who can overcome the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God; Jesus Christ who came by water and blood, not with water only, but with water and blood; with the Spirit as another witness – since the Spirit is truth.

As I settle into my place of prayer, I take time to note any cares or distractions I bring to this time. Am I full of Easter joy, or drained with life's demands and experiences?

I offer all of who I am to my loving Father, and ask the Spirit of truth to pray in me and through me.

I read this rich passage slowly.

Then I re-read it to grow in my awareness of it, allowing it to find a home in me.

I long to notice and be aware of God's presence ... to feel it in my body.

Now I stay with any word or phrase that opens a 'gateway' into my life.

I savour the thoughts, feelings, images it evokes.

What speaks to my heart?

Perhaps I consider this time of prayer as an opportunity to deepen my felt sense of being a beloved child of God ... or maybe I encounter some inner barrier to receiving divine love. I rest and contemplate this.

I share whatever I am experiencing in faith and trust with my Lord ... my alienation and disappointments ... as well as my sense of belonging and gratitude.

I pray for myself ... for the people I know ... for God's other children in this beautiful, yet troubled and spiritually hungry world.

I ask the Spirit of truth for the grace of inner freedom needed to experience the Lord's overwhelming love and desire for me ... and that he might show me how I can share his love with others, even more fully.

When I feel ready, I end my prayer slowly, to the Trinity.

Glory be ...

GOSPEL JOHN 20: 19–31 (abbreviated)

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood amongst them. He said to them, ‘Peace be with you,’ and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father send me, so I am sending you.’ After saying this he breathed on them and said: ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. For whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.’

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, ‘We have seen the Lord,’ he answered, ‘Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.’

Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. ‘Peace be with you,’ he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.’ Thomas replied, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him: ‘You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.’

I consciously slow down, in preparation for my prayer time with the risen Jesus. I become more aware of my life-giving breath; inviting Jesus to breathe upon me ... to fill me with the divine breath of the Holy Spirit.

When ready, I read this joyful, rich Gospel slowly, twice over.

If I am drawn, I allow God to use my imagination to help me enter the story ... to experience it as if I am right there. I don’t need to worry about historically accurate details, or if the scene develops differently from the passage itself. I trust God to lead me.

I try to be there in the Upper Room, either as myself, or as one of the disciples. Using my senses, I immerse myself in what’s happening ... entering a conversation ... listening to what they say to one other ... to Jesus ... to Thomas.

Perhaps I come close to Jesus (or he to me).

Do I speak to him? ... does he speak to me?

Do I touch him ... does he touch my heart?

I let the events unfold in my imagination.

I may respond spontaneously in a conversation with the risen Lord.

In time, I rest in silence, and pray Thomas’s prayer: *My Lord and my God.*

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

Like new-born children you should thirst for milk, on which your spirit can grow to strength.

Entrance Antiphon

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
for his love has no end.

Psalm Response

The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul.

First Reading

This week's texts if you want to explore further:

Acts 4: 32–35; Psalm 117 (118); 1 John 5: 1–6; John 20: 19–31

Melanie Pyke, *Beliene* (melpyke.com)



'Give me your hand ...
doubt no longer, but believe!'



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JESUIT
Ministries



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