



AMDG
SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER
YEAR B
8TH APRIL 2018



Divine Mercy Sunday

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.

Since 2000, at the instigation of Pope John Paul II, the Roman Catholic church has kept the Feast of Divine Mercy on the Sunday after Easter.

The readings, however, are still bathed in the joy of the Resurrection.

In the *First Reading* we see the effect the Risen Lord has on the life of the young Christian communities, led and guided by the Apostles.

The *Psalms* joyfully shows that Jesus, through his Resurrection, is the rejected cornerstone first mentioned by Isaiah (Isaiah 28: 16).

St John in his letter (*Second Reading*) reminds his readers that the true believer is the one who loves God by keeping his commandments – that is, by loving one another as he loved us. Jesus, fully man and fully God, was baptised by water but shed his blood for us.

In the multi-faceted *Gospel* text, we encounter the Risen Lord twice, as well as the Holy Spirit and the disbelieving Thomas. We are reminded of Jesus's patience and infinite mercy; we are also able to witness at first-hand the transformation of Thomas and his deep act of faith as he comes to believe that the Lord is truly risen.

This week, I may want to pray particularly for all the 'Doubting Thomases' around me, and ask the Risen Lord that, in his mercy, he shows them his hands and feet so they may come to believe too.

FIRST READING ACTS 4: 32–35

The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul; no one claimed for his own use anything that he had, as everything they owned was held in common.

The apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, and they were all given great respect.

None of their members was ever in want, as all those who owned land or houses would sell them, and bring the money from them, to present it to the apostles; it was then distributed to any members who might be in need.

How am I feeling as I come to pray today?

Still full of Easter joy ... or weighed down by everyday worries ... or...?

Whatever it is, I trust that the Risen Lord is with me.

He knows and understands me fully.

After adopting a position which keeps me relaxed but alert, I take a deep breath, and then read the text slowly, stopping and pondering where the words particularly catch my attention.

When I read this idealised picture of the new Christian communities, I may feel drawn to compare it with today's society ... smaller units of isolated communities ... extended families ... churches struggling to survive.

In what ways are they similar?

What makes them different?

The apostles act as guides and reminders of the power of the Resurrection.

To whom do I turn when I need a guide or someone to witness to the presence of the Risen Jesus in my life?

In my own words, I tell the Lord what is in my heart.

Perhaps I consider those around me who are in need of help, whether material or spiritual.

In what ways, however small, can I be more at one with them?

How can I show them that the Lord's mercy reaches out to all?

When the time comes, I thank the Lord for being with me, and leave my prayer with a slow, grateful, sign of the cross.

GOSPEL JOHN: 20: 19–31 (part)

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among 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 sent me, so am I sending you.’ After saying this he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. For those 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 can put my finger into the holes they made, 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.’

As always, I give myself time to become still, asking the Holy Spirit to help me.

In time, I read the passage slowly, several times, with an open and welcoming mind and heart.

When I am ready, perhaps I imagine I am with the disciples behind the closed doors. I allow myself to interact with them. What is it like to be with these first disciples?

I notice what happens when Jesus comes and stands with them.

I let his words ‘Peace be with you’ penetrate deep within me.

How do I feel as I hear this? I share with Jesus.

I may be drawn to the experience of Thomas, the sceptic amongst the disciples, who struggles to believe without evidence.

Do I sometimes find myself identifying with him?

I allow myself to respond spontaneously in conversation with the Lord, telling him of any doubts ... or of my desire for a deeper belief.

Towards the end of my prayer, I take time to notice how I am feeling now.

What grace do I want to pray for?

Once again, I share with the Lord using my own words.

I end my time of prayer slowly. *Our Father...*

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

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

First Reading

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

Psalm

The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone.

Psalm

Jesus said: 'You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe'.

Gospel Acclamation

The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you'.

Gospel

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

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

Original painting of the Divine Mercy,
Eugeniusz Kazimirowski, 1934



**'Jesus,
I trust in
you'**



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