

04/12/2026 Homily  
Second Sunday of Easter (Sunday of Divine Mercy)  
<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/041226.cfm>

Easter Sunday was not an easy day for the disciples. Early in the morning the women went to the tomb, and didn't find the body of Jesus. Two other disciples also went, and they conclude that Jesus' body has been stolen. The disciples have forsaken and betrayed Jesus. And they think that the Romans are looking for them to capture them and delete all memories about Jesus. So, they gather together with the doors locked. In the midst of these tensions, fears and doubts, Jesus comes and stands among them. These disciples have found all the ways to disappoint and forsake Jesus, so they feel terrified. And the Risen Lord, with his wounds still open, says to them, "Peace." He gives them the same Spirit that moved Him. He puts the disciples in charge of his continuing ministry.

Before the events of the crucifixion, Jesus had commanded his disciples to forgive those who had trespassed against them. He told them parables of forgiveness and grace. Jesus himself forgave people, some before they asked for forgiveness. He even commanded his disciples to love and forgive their enemies. And the disciples never thought they were going to be Jesus' enemies, the ones that He would forgive. It's amazing that Jesus is so forgiving as to return to those very disciples who so sadly disappointed him by fleeing from his arrest and torture. In this encounter between the Risen Lord and his disciples, we can see an image of the Church: because we are also people who make public promises to serve Jesus, to be part of his Kingdom, to witness to Him, to be loyal to Him and never deny Him, and then, we stumble, we fall away, backslide, deceive, and betray Jesus and ourselves again and again. And Jesus returns to us and says, "Peace be with you," He forgives us, breathes his Holy Spirit upon sinners, even you and me, and once again we are able to stand up, take a breath, and follow him. This is what the Church is about. God finds ways to turn toward you and me, enabling us to turn to God. And He does the same to any and all of us.

After knowing that Jesus has called people like you and me, it is hard not to think that anyone else is welcome. We think we are very nice people. And Jesus constantly commands us to forgive and love our enemies. If Jesus insists, it is because He knows how challenging it is for us to be people of peace and to forgive one another. Sin is not simply a matter of breaking a code of conduct, misusing our power against others,

getting involved in something immoral, or doing what we are not supposed to. Sin is also our human tendency to refuse to get on board with what God is up to in the world. Sin is our failure to allow ourselves to be loved. Christ came to be close to sinners, and His mission is to call sinners like me and you to repentance and fellowship.

This Second Sunday of Easter is called "Divine Mercy Sunday." It is a way to commemorate that with the Resurrection, the gifts of peace and forgiveness are given to us. Mercy is an essential Easter gift to be received and to be given. The Risen Lord is with his wounds still open, because He does not deny the realities of suffering and pain. But He comes, stays in the midst of his beloved disciples, and shows to them the power of God, the same power that was manifested when He was on the Cross: Forgiveness is that power. From the cross Jesus had prayed, "Father, forgive them...." Presumably he was speaking to those who crucified him, the soldiers, the noisy crowd, the priests and government officials. Now, on Easter evening, he enacts forgiveness among his own followers.

During this encounter with his disciples, Jesus breathes upon them the Holy Spirit. Then, He commissions these imperfect, stumbling and unloyal disciples; He sends them, He authorizes them, even to be agents of peace and to forgive the sins of others. Of all gifts the risen Christ could give his disciples, of all the tasks he could have assigned, he forgives them and commissions them to be forgivers of others. The forgiveness of Christ enables the story to move forward. And the Church will continue if we always remember that our vocation is to forgive and love one another, as Christ has forgiven and loved us. We can spend this week reflecting on how we allow Jesus' peace and forgiveness to direct our actions and thoughts, and how willing we are to be vehicles of these gifts in our world. In a world where peace is so fragile, and our tendencies to be hateful and vengeful are too strong. Today we are reminded of our vocation to be people of peace, mercy and reconciliation.

The Universal Prayer  
Second Sunday of Easter  
12th April 2026

Celebrant:

The first Christian community in Jerusalem were united in heart and soul as the apostles testified to the resurrection of Jesus. We pray that we may live in the same spirit.

1. May Pope Leo, beginning his Apostolic Journey to Algeria, Cameroon, Angola and Equatorial Guinea on Monday, will witness to Jesus in such diverse countries with a message of peace and unity.

We pray to the Lord.

2. May Pope Leo's Easter appeal for world peace, dialogue and encounter, be heard by world leaders so that war, violence and destruction is ended swiftly.

We pray to the Lord.

3. May our parish reflect the life of the first Christians of Jerusalem, being united in heart and soul, share generously with those in need, and give witness to the resurrection of Jesus.

We pray to the Lord.

4. May our Catholic youth and young adults seek ways to be authentic leaders of a good life among their peers, and put their faith in Jesus as did the youthful St Thomas.

We pray to the Lord.

5. May the crisis engulfing the nations of the Middle East, the Christians in the Holy Land, the people of Ukraine, Nigeria and Sudan, be resolved.

We pray to the Lord.

6. May our new Easter Catholics continue to rejoice in the Risen Jesus, be welcomed by the community, and become active in the life of the Church.

We pray to the Lord.

7. May the journalists and photographers who have been killed in present wars come to see Jesus, the One who carries all truth and beauty in his resurrection and live with him forever.

We pray to the Lord.

Celebrant:

Father, with St Thomas we acclaim Jesus as our Lord and God, giving thanks for every blessing given to us through him, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.