

Second Sunday of Easter (Sunday of Divine Mercy)

Today, we celebrate the Second Sunday of Easter, a day that St. John Paul II dedicated as Divine Mercy Sunday. The readings today invite us into a profound encounter with the heart of God—a heart that does not beat with judgment, but with an unstoppable, healing love.

The Gospel takes us back to that first Easter evening. We find the disciples huddled together in a locked room. They weren't just hiding from the authorities; they were paralyzed by their own internal darkness. They were heavy with guilt because they had abandoned Jesus in His hour of need. Imagine the tension in that room when Jesus suddenly appeared. They likely expected words of disappointment or a demand for an explanation. Instead, the first words out of His mouth are, "Peace be with you." Jesus does not bring up their past failures. He does not ask why they ran away. Instead, He shows them His wounds. These wounds are the visible price He paid for our sins, but they are now glorified. By breathing the Holy Spirit upon them, Jesus establishes the Sacrament of Reconciliation. He gives the Church the authority to forgive, making sure that His mercy would be a physical, reachable reality for every generation to come.

We also see the deeply personal nature of this mercy through the story of St. Thomas. Thomas was struggling. He couldn't bring himself to believe just because the others told him to; he needed his own encounter. When Jesus returns a week later, He doesn't scold Thomas for his skepticism. He moves directly toward him with compassion. He invites Thomas to touch the very places that hurt the most. This teaches us that Divine Mercy is incredibly patient. It meets us exactly where we are—whether we are in a season of deep confusion, grief, or a simple lack of faith. Thomas's humble cry, "My Lord and my God!" becomes the ultimate profession of faith. It reminds us that God's mercy is a bridge that heals our broken trust and restores our relationship with Him, no matter how long we have been away.

In the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, we see the practical results of this mercy. The early Christian community didn't just pray in private; their faith changed how they lived in public. Because they felt completely forgiven by God,

they were supernaturally moved to be merciful to one another. They shared their belongings and looked out for the poor so that no one was in need.

In the second reading St. Peter tells us that through God's "great mercy," we have been given a new birth and a living hope through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. This "living hope" is not a temporary optimism; it is an anchor for the soul. Peter acknowledges that we may face various trials and sufferings that test our faith like fire tests gold. However, mercy is the reason we can remain joyful even in these difficult times. It assures us that our sins and our sufferings are not the end of our story. Because of the Resurrection, we know that God is always ready to give us a fresh start and that an eternal inheritance is waiting for us.

As we reflect on these readings, we are called to realize that Divine Mercy is the limit God sets on evil. It is His way of saying that no matter how far we have wandered, His arms remain open. Today, Jesus comes to the "locked doors" of our own hearts—the doors we have closed because of shame, pride, or fear of the future. He stands in the center of our lives and offers us the same peace He gave the Apostles. Let us respond by opening those doors and letting His light in. When we trust in His mercy, we are empowered to become instruments of that same mercy in a world that is often cold and unforgiving. Let our lives reflect the joy of the Resurrection, always remembering to pray with confidence:

Jesus, I trust in You.