

SUNDAY GOSPEL REFLECTION

Dear Sisters and Brothers of St. Joseph Parish,

Each year, on the Second Sunday of Easter—the last day of the Easter Octave—the Church celebrates the Sunday of Divine Mercy. On this day, we contemplate the fullness of the Paschal Mystery—Christ’s Passion, death, and Resurrection. The basis of the whole Easter Mystery is the merciful love of God. From the beginning of creation, throughout Scripture, and most perfectly in the life, Passion, death and Resurrection of his Son, Jesus, God has been revealed as love itself. In His infinite love for us, God desires nothing more than to forgive our sins and offer us His mercy. Our world’s need for the message of Divine Mercy took on new urgency in the 20th century. It was during this time that the world witnessed the rise of Nazism and communism and experienced the horrors of the world at war. Civilization was losing the understanding of the sanctity and inherent dignity of every human life.

As these evil ideologies were taking shape, Jesus appeared to a humble Polish nun, whom we know as St. Maria Faustina Kowalska. As Jesus continued to appear to St. Faustina, she recorded His messages to her in her Diary. On one such occasion, Jesus said to St. Faustina: *My daughter, tell the whole world about My inconceivable mercy. I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the Fount of My Mercy* (Diary 699).

Jesus appeared to the humble Faustina and asked that we celebrate the gift of His mercy today. Our celebration of this Easter Octave is a celebration of the mercy and forgiveness that are now available to all of us, by virtue of Christ’s Resurrection. We must only run toward the outstretched arms of Christ.

In the Gospel, we hear the story of Jesus’ appearance to the disciples after His death. Jesus comes to them and exposes the wounds of His hands and His side—the wounds He endured for our salvation. And as the Resurrected Lord stood in their midst, the first words He spoke to them were, “Peace be with you” (John 20:19). Many of these disciples had abandoned Jesus during His Passion. During Christ’s moment of greatest need, they scattered, leaving Jesus alone in His sacrifice. Many might think what the disciples had done was unforgivable. Yet Jesus appears to them and offers them His peace. And then He breathed on them and gave them the power to forgive sin, to extend His own mercy. Now, Thomas was not present when Jesus appeared, and he refused to believe the disciples when they told him the Lord had appeared to them. Thomas needed to see to believe, and so Jesus returned and revealed himself eight days later, on the Octave of Easter. Jesus showed Thomas His hands and His side, saying, “do not be unbelieving, but believe” (Gospel, John 20:27). How often have we doubted the Lord like Thomas? How often have we hidden in fear, unable to bear the shame of our mistakes and failures?

St. John Paul II, who canonized St. Faustina, said in his 2001 homily for the Sunday of Divine Mercy, “Divine Mercy! This is the Easter gift that the Church receives from the risen Christ and offers to humanity.” Today we celebrate that Easter gift of God’s unending, merciful love for all his children. This is at the heart of the Gospel. Let us never fail to seek the mercy that God desires to freely give us. Jesus, I trust in you.



Have a Blessed Divine Mercy Sunday 2026!

Fr. Rafal Ligenza
Pastor