

Divine Mercy Sunday (2nd Sunday of Easter)

John 20:19-31

'Eight days later, Jesus came.'

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.' And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.'

Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord'. But he said to them, 'Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.'

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Reflection

Divine Mercy Sunday, established by Pope John Paul II in 2000, celebrates God's incredible mercy, inspired by Saint Faustina Kowalska's visions of Jesus. In these visions, Jesus revealed that His mercy is available to everyone, no matter their past. Just as Jesus forgave the disciples in the Gospel, Saint Faustina spread the message of forgiveness and hope, calling people to trust in God's boundless love.

In the Gospel today, Jesus appears to His disciples, offering peace and forgiveness, and giving them the power to forgive others. Thomas, who doubts, is shown mercy when Jesus invites him to touch His wounds. Jesus says, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." This speaks to us, reminding us that God's mercy is available to everyone, even when we can't see it directly.

Saint Faustina and Frederic Ozanam, founder of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, both lived out this call to mercy in different ways. While Faustina's mission was to promote God's mercy through prayer and devotion, Frederic Ozanam worked to show mercy through action, serving the poor and marginalised. Both understood that mercy isn't just about feeling compassion; it's about acting on that compassion—whether through forgiveness, kindness, or service.

Materials needed

- Paper
- Pens

Activity

- Faith is all about believing without seeing. Just like Thomas needed to see Jesus to believe, we are often called to trust in things we cannot see.
- Take a few moments to think about other things in our lives that we know exist, even though we can't see them. Create a list together, sharing your ideas with the group.
- Once you've created your list, take some time to reflect:
- How do you know these things are real, even though you can't see them?
- How does this help you think about faith and trusting in God's presence, even when you can't see Him?
- By recognising the unseen but undeniable things in our lives, we can better understand what it means to believe in God's love and presence without needing physical proof.



Call to Action

There are so many beautiful ways to pray. St Faustina gave us the image of the Divine Mercy and a powerful meditative prayer. Why not challenge yourself to set aside some time this week to pray it? You can find "The Divine Mercy Chaplet in Song" on YouTube, which will guide you through the prayer in under 25 minutes. It's a wonderful way to spend time during this Eastertide.