

Divine Mercy Sunday (2nd Sunday of Easter Year C)

Acts 5:12-16—The Shadow of Peter

1. Miracles: “signs” and “wonders” now done “by the hands of the apostles” (5:12)
2. Solomon’s Portico: place of gathering in the Jerusalem Temple (5:12)
3. Conversions: “multitudes” of “believers” are added (5:14)
4. Peter’s Shadow: the holiness of Peter; power to heal (5:15; cf. Luke 8:46)
5. Healings: “they were all healed” (5:15)

Psalm 118—Give Thanks to the Lord, for He is Good

1. Three Groups: (1) Priests, (2) Israelites, (3) All who “fear the LORD”
2. Mercy: “his mercy (Hebrew *hesed*) endures forever!”
3. Resurrection: Stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone! (vv. 22-24)

Revelation 1:9-11, 12-13, 17-19—The Revelation to John on Patmos

1. John: in exile on the prison island of Patmos (1:9)
2. Revelation: John has a vision “in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day” (1:10)

John 20:19-31—Jesus Sends the Apostles; Doubting Thomas

1. First Day of the Week = Sunday (cf. Genesis 1:1-2:4)
2. “Peace Be With You” = the risen Jesus greets his disciples (Hebrew *shalom*) (20:19)
3. Hands and Feet: the risen Jesus has *the same body* that was crucified (20:20)
4. Apostles: “as the Father has sent (Gk *apostellō*) me, even so I send you” (20:21)
5. Reconciliation:
 - a. Action: Jesus “breathed” on them (cf. Gen 2:7)
 - b. Word: “Receive the Holy Spirit”
 - c. Power: to “forgive” and “retain” sins
6. Faith: “do not be faithless, but believing” (20:27)
7. Conclusion: Jesus did “many other signs” (20:30)
 - a. Purpose: “that you may believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (20:31)
 - b. Goal: “that you may have life (Greek *Zōē*) in his name” (20:31)

Living Magisterium: the Sacrament of Mercy

[T]he Lord instituted the sacrament of penance, principally when after his Resurrection he breathed upon his disciples and said: “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” [John 20:22f.]. (Council of Trent, Session 14; DS 1670).

Living Tradition: the Absence of Thomas

Pope Gregory the Great: It was not an accident that that particular disciples was not present. The divine mercy ordained that a doubting disciple should, by feeling in his

Master the wounds of the flesh, heal in us the wounds of unbelief. The unbelief of Thomas is more profitable to our faith than the belief of the other disciples. For the touch by which he is brought to believe confirms our minds in belief, beyond all question. (Gregory the Great, *Forty Gospel Homilies* 26; trans. J. C. Elowsky, ACCS, p. 367)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (2nd Sunday of Easter, Year C)

1. How are the miracles performed by the apostles an extension of the saving power of Jesus' own ministry?

2. According to the Gospel of John, one of the first things Jesus did on Easter Sunday was give the disciples the power to forgive and retain sins. The Church interprets this event as the origins of the sacrament of confession (see CCC 1442). Have you ever connected this passage with the power of confession before?

3. According to St. Gregory the Great, why was Thomas absent from Jesus' first resurrection appearance? How does it benefit us?

For Further Study

1. CCC 1420-1498: This section of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* contains the Church's official teaching the sacrament of reconciliation. It is essential reading.
2. Joel C. Elowsky, *John* (2 vols.; Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament IV; Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006), 355-75.
3. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Dives in Misericordia* (The Mercy of God) (1980). A must read for anyone interested in Divine Mercy Sunday. (available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30111980_dives-in-misericordia.html)