

2nd Sunday of Easter – Divine Mercy Sunday

Sing an Easter Hymn

Make the Sign of the Cross+

Read by Leader of the Family:

The compassion of God is beyond all telling.
We gather in the hope of the resurrection
and know that we share in the joy
of the promise of an eternal inheritance
offered to us through the Mass.

Read by Leader of the Family - Penitential Act:

The mercy of God reaches down from the heavens
into the hearts of those who turn to the Lord.

Lord, you offer us the gift of faith.

Lord, have mercy.

Family responds: ‘Lord, have mercy!’

Lord, you show us the way to the Father.

Christ, have mercy.

Family responds: ‘Lord, have mercy!’

Lord, you turn our hearts to love.

Lord, have mercy.

Family responds: ‘Lord, have mercy!’

Recite the Gloria!!!

Today’s Readings – use for reflection.

First Reading Acts 4:32-35

The early Church, gathered together,
is shown as a foundation for prayer,
unity and the sharing of goods for the good of all.

Second Reading 1 John 5:1-6

Love of God is revealed in love of one’s neighbour.

Gospel John 20:19-31

The doubting apostle, Thomas, discovers new faith in the risen Christ.

HOMILY FOR DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

“Put your finger here; look, here are my hands... Doubt no longer but believe.”

Touch is the most powerful and intimate gesture we can share with another person. It is such a deep aspect of being human that it is, of course, the most powerful way of communicating love. At the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, we had to learn to live with the pain of “social distancing”, shielding and self-isolating. Gestures such as handshakes, hugs and embraces became threats because of the danger of spreading coronavirus. Children learnt to be like helicopters by stretching out their arms to measure the distance between them. Public buildings have had to be reconfigured. Such actions create distance rather than intimacy. Many have suffered from social isolation and some people’s mental health issues have been exacerbated.

The sacraments became more difficult to receive because they rely on touch and physical presence which mediate the presence of Christ; for example, the washing with water at baptism, and the anointing with sacred chrism at baptism, confirmation and holy orders. The anointing with the oil for the sick brings comfort and healing. The bread is transformed into the body of Christ but still looks like bread. The wine becomes the blood of Christ but tastes like wine. The Church had to pause its gathering for Mass. This Easter season we continue to build up our new world.

The intimate scene of encounter between the risen Christ and St Thomas is remarkable. When Jesus had appeared to his disciples after the resurrection, the one who was crucified stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” They saw the wounds in his hands and side and believed he had risen from the dead. Thomas, who was not present on that first Sunday, did not accept the word of the others. He was perhaps sceptical or maybe proud. Yet Jesus continues to desire to speak to him and bring forth his belief. The mercy of Jesus is so powerful that he does not abandon him but seeks another way to speak into his heart. Jesus will always keep trying to find a way into the hardened heart and never gives up on anyone. When he appears in front of Thomas, he invites him to touch his hands with his finger and put his hand into his side. Such an intimate gesture is a sign of profound love. We hear Thomas’ profound profession of faith, “My Lord and my God!”

We must love God and allow God to touch us if we wish our faith to increase. God touches us in the sacraments and especially when we receive Holy Communion. We consume the body and blood of Christ and as an act of reverence can pray, “My Lord and my God!” We grow in our Christian faith when we love our neighbour. The two commandments are deeply interrelated: when we love God, we love God’s children. When we love God’s children, we bring forth our love of God. The appearance of the risen Christ to Thomas teaches us that when we touch the wounds of the body of Christ, then our faith

is deepened. Our faith in Christ is not something abstract, but real in creation. We touch the wounds of the body of Christ when we reach out to those who suffer, the sick child, the dying parent, those who are poor or abused, those who have to go hungry, those whose wounds are sore and hurting. There we faithfully live the commandment to love our neighbour and love God. We are invited to enter into the wounds of others and be the compassionate presence of Christ through his body, the Church. He is the head, the source, the one who provides the nourishment and power for this outreach of love. He is the energy so that his Church may live and witness to this love. We do this through the power of touch.

Our age has also become acutely aware that touch can be intrusive or abusive; the unwanted hug, embrace or kiss. To respect others, we have to be keenly aware of what we are doing and act appropriately. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit; we are invited to see the other person with wonder and respect. Teaching children this art is important for growth. We share in the mercy of God by loving and serving others. The power of touch is a God-given gift to renew creation and God's holy people.

Summary

1. The mercy of God reaches out to all in their need and according to their needs. The compassionate Lord searches for Thomas to welcome him back into a loving relationship.
2. God touches us in the sacraments when we encounter the risen Christ like Thomas.
3. We are called to immerse ourselves in the suffering and wounds of the world in order to be the presence of Christ in a broken world.

Recite the Creed

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL FOR DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Leader of the Family:

Compassionate Father,
on this Sunday when we celebrate the mercy of God,
be merciful to us as we pray for our needs
and the needs of the world.
as we respond, 'Lord, hear our pray'.

Member of the Family:

1. For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
and our Bishop William and all the bishops of the Church:
that they may shepherd the Church with love

and the witness of service to others.
We pray to the Lord...

2. For world leaders:
that they may build peace
upon the foundations of justice
and care for those who are weakest
and most vulnerable in society.
We pray to the Lord...
3. For all families:
that in the struggles and joys of family life
they may know the presence of the God
who loves them and walks with them.
We pray to the Lord...
4. For those who are sick:
that they may find the perseverance to endure
and wait for God's healing.
We pray to the Lord...
5. For those who have died,
especially Imo Wolfgang Von Neudeff,
and those who have died in the pandemic:
may they find eternal rest and rise in glory.
We pray to the Lord...

Leader of the Family:
Merciful Father, strengthen our faith,
deepen our hope
and help us love generously
all those we meet in the week ahead.
We ask you to hear our prayers,
through Christ our Lord. Amen!!!

Sing a Eucharistic Hymn

Recite the Our Father

Make the Sign of the Cross+

Sing an Easter Hymn