

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER - Divine Mercy Sunday

Acts 4:32-35; 1 Jn. 5:1-6; Jn. 20:19-31

*Excerpts from Pope Francis - Regina Caeli – 12 April 2015*

by Father Charles Fillion

11 April 2021

Brothers and sisters, today is the eighth day after Easter, and the Gospel according to John documents for us the two appearances of the Risen Jesus to the Apostles gathered in the Upper Room, where on the evening of Easter Thomas was absent, and eight days later, he was present. The first time, the Lord showed them the wounds to his body, breathed on them and said: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” (Jn 20:21). He imparts his same mission, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

But that night Thomas, who did not want to believe what the others witnessed, was not there. “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe” (cf. Jn 20:25).

Eight days later — which is precisely today — Jesus returned to stand among them and turned immediately to Thomas, inviting him to touch the wounds in his hands and his side. He faced his doubts so that, through the marks of the passion, he was able to reach the fullness of faith in the Paschal Mystery, namely faith in the Resurrection of Jesus. Thomas was one who was not satisfied and seeks, intending to confirm himself, to have his own personal experience. After initial resistance and apprehension, in the end even he was able to believe, even though through difficulty, he came to believe.

Jesus waited for him patiently and offered himself to the difficulties and uncertainty of the last to arrive. The Lord proclaimed “blessed”, those who believe without seeing (cf. v. 29) the first of which is Mary his Mother. He also met the needs of the doubting disciple: “Put your finger here, and see my hands...” (v. 27). In the redeeming contact with the wounds of the Risen One, Thomas showed his own wounds, his own injuries, his own lacerations, his own humiliation; in the marks of the nails, he found the convincing proof that he was loved, that he was expected, that he was understood. He found himself before the Messiah filled with kindness, mercy, tenderness.

This was the Lord he was searching for, in the hidden depths of his being, for he had always known He was like this. And how many of us are searching deep in our heart to meet Jesus, just as He is: kind, merciful, tender! For we know, deep down, that He is like this. Having rediscovered personal contact with Christ who is kind and mercifully patient, Thomas understood the profound significance of his Resurrection and, intimately transformed, he declared his full and total faith in Him exclaiming: “My Lord and my God!” (v. 28). Beautiful, Thomas’ expression is beautiful!

He was able to “touch” the Paschal Mystery which fully demonstrated God’s redeeming love (cf. Eph 2:4). All of us too are like Thomas: on this second Sunday of Easter we are called to contemplate, in the wounds of the Risen One, Divine Mercy, which overcomes all human limitations and shines on the darkness of evil and of sin.

In 2015, Pope Francis declared an *Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy*. For some people, it was a year to welcome the immeasurable wealth of God’s love and mercy. I would like to share with you just some of the words that the Holy Father wrote to start the Year of Mercy.

Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy. These words might well sum up the mystery of the Christian faith. Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus of Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person reveals the mercy of God. We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it. Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness. When faced with the gravity of sin, God responds with the fullness of mercy. Mercy will always be greater than any sin, and no one can place limits on the love of God who is ever ready to forgive. We can see in Sacred Scripture, mercy is a key word that indicates God’s action towards us. He does not limit himself merely to affirming his love, but makes it visible and tangible. The mercy of God is his loving concern for each one of us. He feels responsible; that is, he desires our wellbeing and he wants to see us happy, full of joy, and peaceful. This is the path which the merciful love of Christians must also travel. As the Father loves, so do his children. Just as he is merciful, so we are called to be merciful to each other (*Misericordiae Vultus*).

One of things that Pope Francis asked us to do was to reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. By rediscovering these corporal and spiritual works of mercy, we are called to be *Merciful like the Father*.

Brothers and sisters, let us keep our eyes turned to Jesus, who always seeks us, waits for us, forgives us. In his wounds He heals us and forgives all of our sins. May the Virgin Mother help us to be merciful with others as Jesus is with us.