

ST. THOMAS INDIAN MISSION

2nd Sunday of Easter
Divine Mercy Sunday
Year B, April 11, 2021

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Fr. George "of the desert" Decasa
Pastor

Our Sunday Masses are now held inside the Church, on Saturdays at 4:30 PM and on Sundays at 8:30 AM.
Please come in a face mask and observe social distancing.

1st Reading: Acts 4:32-35

The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all. There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need.

The Word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm:

"Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting."

Let the house of Israel say, "His mercy endures forever." Let the house of Aaron say, "His mercy endures forever." Let those who fear the LORD say, "His mercy endures forever."

R.

I was hard pressed and was falling, but the Lord helped me. My strength and my courage is the Lord, and he has been my savior. The

joyful shout of victory in the tents of the just:

R.

The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. By the Lord has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; let us be glad and rejoice in it. **R.**

2nd Reading: 1 John 5:1-6

Beloved: Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten by God, and everyone who loves the Father loves also the one begotten by him. In this way we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whoever is begotten by God conquers the world. And the victory that conquers the world is our faith. Who indeed is the victor over the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is the one who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ, not by water alone, but by water and blood. The Spirit is the one that testifies, and the Spirit is truth.

The Word of the Lord.

LECTOR: Gospel Acclamation:

**ALL: Alleluia,
Alleluia, Alleluia.**

LECTOR: You believe in me, Thomas, because you have seen me; blessed are they who have not seen me, but still believe!

**ALL: Alleluia,
Alleluia, Alleluia.**

Gospel Reading: John 20:19-31

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, "We

have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

The Gospel of the Lord.

The Mystery of Faith:

Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection, you have set us free.

REFLECTING ON THE WORD GUIDEPOSTS

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Today, second Sunday of Easter, is Divine Mercy Sunday. It is not another distinct feast day, but simply a secondary title for the end of the Easter octave to call attention to the mercy of God that has been poured out on us through the death and resurrection of Christ. It is not a day meant for celebrating the sacrament of penance but a day to give thanks for God's constant mercy and forgiveness.

Those of you who are my age or older may still remember the other traditional secondary titles to the second Sunday of Easter. It was traditionally known as *White Sunday* which refers to the newly baptized laying aside their white garments after this Mass, marking the end of the Easter octave. Today was also called *Low Sunday*, probably in contrast to the splendor of Easter itself. It marks the end of the octave, the eight days that are celebrated as one extended day. Since the year 2000, the second Sunday of Easter has been given the secondary title of Divine Mercy Sunday.

Already in the Old Testament, through Moses' experience of the "burning bush," God reveals himself under a name not known beforehand and, under this new name, he wants to be known and to be approached. "*Say this to the sons of Israel, I am YAHWEH, and therefore I will free you from the Egyptian burdens . . . I will release you. . . I will deliver you*" (Ex 6:6). The true name, and therefore the true essence of the biblical God is thus described as **YAHWEH or I AM WHO AM**, that is to say, "always being faithfully present," later to be expressed as EMMANUEL. And when in the Old Testament God's being-with-us (Emmanuel) is described, it uses the word **COMPASSION or MERCY**. "*The Lord, the Lord, a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity*" (Ex 34:7). Mercy is thus the true content of God's name.

Jesus came as the incarnation of **Divine Mercy**. His public ministry was characterized by miracles and cures which he did, **not for a show of power but out of compassion or mercy for the people**. The culmination of his incarnation of compassion and mercy for us was his crucifixion and death on the Cross. **It was a kenosis — a self-emptying. He emptied himself out of his loving mercy towards all.**

God's plan of Mercy has come to us in our modern world especially through the revelations received by a young Polish nun and mystic, Sister Maria Faustina in the 1930's. Sister Faustina received visions of the scourged, suffering Jesus throughout who asked her to become His apostle and "Secretary of Mercy," to proclaim the truth about God's mercy to the world, and to implore God's mercy for sinners through new forms of devotion. She cooperated with God's mercy by sacrificing her own life for the sake of sinners.

Pope John Paul II had a special devotion to Sister Faustina as a model of showing God's mercy to others. This was his approach to others which caused the unity in his homeland — Poland, putting an end to communism in that country.

Pope John Paul II canonized St. Faustina on April 30, 2000, which was the second Sunday of Easter and on that day he officially designated the second Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday.

Divine Mercy Sunday is the flipside of Easter. After his resurrection, Jesus gave a new commandment: Love one another as I have loved you. That is easy to do, especially if they are those who are lovable, those who have not offended us, those who belong to our group, etc. What about those who offend us, those who do not share the same ideas or views with us? In that case, love takes the form of mercy or forgiveness: Have mercy or forgive one another as I have mercy on you or as I have forgiven you.

DO NOT BE UNBELIEVING BUT BELIEVE!

Jesus said to Thomas, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed." "Blessed," refers to ultimate happiness or a person in God's grace. We who believe are those of whom Jesus spoke. We are the blessed who do not see yet believe. What a glorious place to be — standing in the grace of God.

We know that we have all experienced "doubting Thomas" moments. Like the doubting Thomas, we say in effect, "Unless I see a sign or visible proof, I refuse to believe." However, faith in God should not hinge on these. Faith is the virtue of being certain without needing visible proof but to trust God's words. The following often-cited story may illustrate the point:

While out in the mountains exploring, a young man slipped and fell. Down he rolled over a precipice. It meant sure death, but fortunately he was able to grab the branch of a tree which arrested his fall. Hanging precariously with the branch cracking and about to give way, he prayed aloud, "Lord, if you are up there, save me!" God answered, "Yes, I am here and of course I'll help you. The first thing you have to do is LET GO of your hold on the branch." The man looked up again and hollered, "If there is anybody else up there . . . help!" Poor guy! God's command was too much to accept. So he switched loyalty.

There are times when God tells us to "let go," to trust him even when the situation looks hopeless, even absurd. It can be the untimely death of a loved one, an incurable sickness, a financial crisis, an unjust treatment, and so on.

What's my attitude when such trying moments strike?

REFLECTING ON TODAY'S FIRST READING

At their root, poverty, hunger, and scarcity are problems of the heart. It has been said that there is already enough food to feed the world, but the human heart seems to stumble when it comes to sharing. Too many human hearts do not want to put their blessings to work for others.

The Church does not advocate socialism, that is, taking from the rich to give to the poor. Instead, we just need to use our possessions as God intended. The following illustration may be an oversimplification, but it helps us understand our passage from Acts:

The Jewish sense of material items was that there was a finite amount of all things. For example, there are only so many soccer balls. While there might be enough for everyone to have one or two or even three, if someone is hoarding soccer balls, some will have to go without it. It's OK to have more than one soccer ball as long as we are not preventing someone else from having one.

Luke paints a picture of a community in which all human needs are met. He is passing on Jesus' teaching that, while possessions and wealth are perfectly OK, they bring responsibility. We can be rich while still improving the lives of those around us.

What the early Christians became known for was how they cared for others. That was because the apostles and the community allowed faith to change their hearts.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

CELEBRANT:

Like the early community of believers, let us be of one heart and one mind as we bring our needs and concerns before God.

LECTOR:

For the Church, that we may strive to build a world where everyone cares for the common good, where no one is needy, and where everyone's material needs are satisfied, *let us pray*..

For leaders of nations, that they may work for justice and reconciliation within their countries and regions, seeking an end to conflict and discord, *let us pray* . . .

For those who have committed horrible crimes and feel that they are beyond mercy, that they may be truly remorseful and come to know the unbounded mercy of God, *let us pray* . . .

For those who were initiated into the Church last weekend, that their new life in the Lord may inspire and strengthen the faith of all Christians, *let us pray* . . .

That we may be an instrument of peace in our nation and our community, especially between those who are divided by race, gender, class, or politics, *let us pray* . . .

For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, *let us pray* . . .

CELEBRANT:

Merciful God, you never fail to give us another opportunity when we have failed, when we have sinned, when we have turned away from you. Embrace us in your loving arms with the comfort of your divine mercy, through Christ our Lord.

A REMINDER RE CORONA VIRUS:

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads mainly from person to person, typically through respiratory droplets from coughing, sneezing, or talking.

Airborne transmission is infection spread through exposure to those virus-containing respiratory droplets comprised of smaller droplets and particles that can remain suspended in the air over long distances (usually greater than 6 feet) and time (typically hours).

To protect yourself and others, please stay home for 14 days if you think you've been exposed to someone who has COVID-19. More importantly, be vaccinated. *Read on . . .*

An excerpt from Bishop McElroy's letter:

“. . . I write to you in hope as a pathway for emerging from the Covid pandemic is now clear for our nation. The love of God has accompanied us throughout this painful year of sickness, death and isolation, and now God has brought us vaccines that can heal us and heal our world.

It is vitally important that all of us receive the Covid vaccine. The Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson are safe and effective. They are fully approved for use at this moment by the teachings of our Church. And as Pope Francis has so clearly taught, receiving the vaccine is not only for ourselves as individuals. It is for everyone that we treasure, to keep them safe and healthy and bring back the joy of life to us all.

. . . . The sooner we are all vaccinated, the sooner we will be able to return to the many joys of our lives that we have missed during this past year of suffering. The vaccines, with our continued masking and social distancing during the coming months, will bring this hateful pandemic to an end.”



March 27-28 Sunday
Collections... \$ 818.00

April 1, Holy Thursday
Collection.... \$ 331.00

April 2, Good Friday
Collection for the Holy
Land..\$ 377.00

April 3-4 Easter Sunday
Collections...\$ 1,649.00

Via Online: March 23 to
April 5.....\$ 940.00

Laugh a little:

One Easter a priest and a taxi driver both died and went to heaven. St. Peter was at the Pearly Gates to meet them. "Come with me," St. Peter said to the taxi driver. The taxi driver followed St. Peter to a mansion. It had everything you could imagine from a bowling alley to an Olympic-size pool. "Oh my Lord, thank you," said the taxi driver.

Next, St. Peter led the priest to a rough shack with a bunk bed and a little old television set. "I think you're a little mixed up," said the priest. "Shouldn't I be the one who gets the mansion? After all I was a priest, went to church every day, and preached God's word." "Yes, that's true," St. Peter answered. "But during your Easter homilies people slept. When the taxi driver drove, everyone prayed."

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