



WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER (DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY), CYCLE A

Fr. David Rosenberg

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In this week's Divine Mercy Sunday Gospel we experience the appearance of Jesus where He encourages the fearful disciples and resolves Thomas' doubts. "*Doubting Thomas*" thought he needed to actually touch the wounds of Jesus, but once Jesus spoke to him with the words, "...and do not be unbelieving, but believe" the Word of God was enough. It was his ears that brought him to believe. For Christians down through the ages, following this profound witness of Thomas, faith comes through hearing - "*Lectio Divina*" - the hearing of the gospel preached.

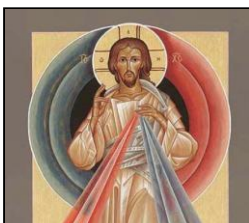
In your reflection this week, consider using what St Ignatius of Loyola called "holy imagination" to place yourself in the Upper Room "*when the doors were locked, where the disciples were...*" Be a witness along with the disciples to the first public appearance of Jesus since the resurrection. Experience the bestowing of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. Recall if you can, your first experience of the Holy Spirit bestowing this gift on you. For all who experience this moment, it is a fulfillment of the promise of Jesus at the Last Supper. "*Peace be with 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.*" How can these powerful words possibly be for your ears? Through the divinization granted to us at our baptism. Then, this radical statement comes to life within us as we take on the Sacred Heart of Jesus and his mercy. Your meditation can be for you a manifestation of the reality of the Mystical Body of Christ, "...*Christ gave of himself to the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...*" see Ephesians 4:4-13

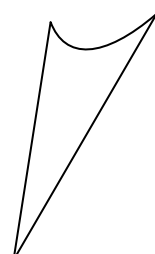
As the Gospel story shifts to *Doubting Thomas*, his problem isn't for him alone. Most of us have had similar doubts at some point. Even if we have expressed a desire to believe, interior barriers blind our spiritual senses. This is why this Gospel is so important for us to revisit every year. Jesus in his divine mercy appeared for a second time, giving Thomas the faith he needed. Jesus does not rebuke, as we might expect, but rather gives Thomas through His affirming Word, a deeper sustaining faith. Jesus' Word is meant for all generations of Christians who are challenged to believe without having seen.

The final verse of this Gospel is an invitation from Jesus to us to interweave His story into the story of our lives: "*may 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.*"

In reflection this week, may the divine image of Jesus appear to you as He did St Faustine with his right hand raised in a blessing and his left touching his garment above his heart.



*For the Sake
of His Sorrowful Passion
Have Mercy on Us
and on the Whole World.
Divine Mercy Chaplet*



A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

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 nailmarks
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

