

Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday)



Prayer for Mercy through Human Hands

God our Father,
you sent your Son
to teach us about your mercy.

Help us to remember
his lesson of compassion to Thomas:
He does not scold, but simply shows
his wounds.

We thank you for your many saints
who have shown us the meaning of mercy:
Katharine Drexel, Elizabeth Ann Seton,

Damien of Molokai,
who extended to suffering people
the compassion of Christ.

We ask you to bless now the people
in our lives

who have shown us mercy:
friends, relatives, teachers—

*[Add here the names of merciful people you
have known.]*

May their examples inspire us to be
merciful also.

We ask this through the same Christ our
Lord. Amen.

Sunday, May 1, 2011 Through the Entryway of Doubt

Today's Readings: Acts 2:42–47; 1 Peter 1:3–9; John 20:19–31. Although it has been celebrated for centuries, mercy can seem abstract. Today, Jesus gives mercy a human face and touch. Before we criticize Thomas, what might we do in a similar situation? Would we also be skeptical if our friends told us that someone had returned from death? Wouldn't we want to see for ourselves? Thomas may simply voice the questions most disciples harbor secretly.

The first disciples, caught in fear and confusion, are hardly the finest spokespersons for the Gospel, and neither are we. We have the same mixture of doubt and certainty, anxiety and joy that they had. Jesus responds to us as he did to Thomas—without harsh judgment. He understands our need for concrete reassurance. After all, God created us

with five senses to help us learn. And if Thomas, stubbornly insistent on tangible proof, can believe, maybe there's hope for us! To us, as to him, Jesus extends merciful invitation: "touch me and see." Only by coming dangerously close to this wounded Lord will we experience the transformation of *our* wounds. Doubt isn't evil: it's the entryway to hope.

Where we might have expected glory and trumpets the first Sunday after Easter, instead we get typical honest, human groping toward truth. A splendid reunion between Jesus and his friends? Not quite. Maybe it's something better: Jesus' mercy, meeting them where they (and we) are stumbling, extending his hand in genuine understanding and compassion.



This Week at Home

Monday, May 2

Mary's Month

Traditionally, Catholics have honored Mary in May with prayers, songs, and bouquets of spring flowers. In Canto 32 of *The Divine Comedy*, Dante describes Mary: "Look now upon the face that is most like the face of Christ . . ." Knowing Mary's face helps us to recognize Christ's, and Mary shows us what we are all meant to become: human beings fully alive. Today's Readings: Acts 4:23-31; John 3:1-8.

Tuesday, May 3

Feast of Saint Phillip and Saint James

Two of the original apostles were named James; today we celebrate the son of Alphaeus, a "founding father" of the Christian community. Philip came from Bethsaida in Galilee. In the Gospel he often expresses limited, human ways of thinking that Jesus had to correct (see John 6:7 and John 14:9a). This is encouraging. Even when we frequently get it wrong, we can still become saints! Today's Readings: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; John 14:6-14.

Wednesday, May 4

Sharing Easter Joy

In this wonderful season of festivity, are there people around you who are not in a position to celebrate? Do you have elderly family members or neighbors who would appreciate a visit or an outing? Illness, unemployment, and suffering continue, even after the Resurrection. Find ways to be a bearer of God's steadfast love and care during Easter just as you were during Lent. Today's Readings: Acts 5:17-26; John 3:16-21.

Thursday, May 5

Mexican American Spirituality

Today many Mexican Americans are celebrating Cinco de Mayo, Mexico's victory over the French in the Battle of Puebla, 1862, and everyone is invited to join in. Just as Hispanic cuisine

and culture are becoming better appreciated in America, Mexican spirituality also has much to contribute to Anglophone Catholics. Learn more in the book *Primero Dios: Hispanic Liturgical Resource*, by Mark R. Francis and Arturo J. Perez-Rodriguez (Chicago: LTP, 1997). *Gracias a Dios!* Today's Readings: Acts 5: 27-33; John 3:31-36.

Friday, May 6

Abundance and Richness of Easter

After the Lenten fast, Easter is a delightful foretaste of the heavenly banquet, a magnification of the Eucharist. On Easter Sunday morning, many households eat breakfasts with rich, buttery breads and lovely egg concoctions. In today's Gospel we hear again the story of Jesus feeding the huge crowd with only five barley loaves and two fish—another expression of the abundance and richness of divine love. But the people misunderstand and focus on the physical result of the miracle. They want to make Jesus a king. We are also tempted to focus on the physical—to look for a steady supply of our Easter treats. But feasts have to be few and far between to retain their savor and their full power as signs. Today's Readings: Acts 5:34-42; John 6:1-15.

Saturday, May 7

Saint Rose Venerini

Born in Viterbo, Italy, Rose chose the life of a teacher rather than a contemplative sister. She knew her natural teaching abilities and opened a free school for girls in 1685. She then oversaw teacher training and administered diocesan schools. As her reputation grew, she started schools throughout Italy. Saint Rose was canonized rather recently, in 2006. Her efforts call to mind some similar ones today. For instance, the Sisters of Loretto are starting schools for young women in Pakistan, and the Daughters of Charity teach girls to read in Vietnam. Thanks be to God for Saint Rose and for all who follow her example! Today's Readings: Acts 6:1-7; John 6:16-21.



© 2010 Liturgy Training Publications. 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kathy Coffey. Illustrated by Laura James. Scripture quotations are from *The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible: Catholic Edition*, copyright © 1993 and 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by Permission. All rights reserved. Permission to publish granted by the Archdiocese of Chicago, on September 20, 2010.

 Keeping the Seasons

Reproducibles for Lent-Triduum-Easter 2011