

2nd Sunday of Easter – Divine Mercy Sunday – April 12, 2026 – Good Shepherd Parish

Scripture Reading: Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Psalm: Ps 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

R. (1) 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. (1) Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.

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. (1) Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.

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. (1) Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.

Scripture Reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time. In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Gospel: 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 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.

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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God.

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud.

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

The word “incredible!” has been so badly over-used in our day that it now means little more than “surprising.” But the word’s true meaning—unbelievable—is on this day appropriate: an event that is so unexpected that the mind actually cannot believe it is true. Jesus is risen.. In spite of his cynicism, Thomas had always belonged to Jesus. “I remember when I was an early teenager and my grandfather died. My young eyes actually looked directly at his body out in the garden of their home. He had been gardening. That whole day and the day after I kept thinking secretly he would come back. A car would pull up to the house and a voice in me would say “It must be him; he is here after all!” Anyone who has grieved knows how this is. Your mind keeps denying the loss. You have to correct yourself when you say “she is such a wonderful cook ... oh dear, I mean she ... was such a wonderful cook.” Tears come. The deep but of course false hope lingers, reluctant to give up its wishing and longing. Doubting Thomas was no different. He had what he thought were false hopes “Jesus just cannot be dead, not Jesus.” So, to correct his error, he erected a staunch wall against the resurrection story. It would hurt too much if he allowed hope to come back again and then watch it shatter like Humpty Dumpty. Have you ever noticed how people run away from what they most desire to be true?

Jesus was actually here *with us!*” the Apostles tell Thomas. “The doors were all locked and he suddenly was standing right there! He talked to us!” Thomas’s reaction? NO. NO. No way. Incredible. I cannot accept it. Better to deny what could not be possible. He was like me imagining my grandfather walking through the door as he always did. So Thomas had to dam up this child’s way of imagining. His leader was dead, and nothing in this world could change it. So Christ appeared and showed him. It was not only seeing Christ in person but actually touching the wounds in his hands and his side. Too much to believe, but suddenly impossible to disbelieve. Thomas gave in. His embarrassment revealed how much he had wanted this. How long would it take you or me to admit how wrong our doubts were? We need to pray about the status of our own belief. Can we find within ourselves that we do need the Resurrection to be true? Can we locate the places where our doubts are lurking? How they are sabotaging us? Can we pray for the ability to believe, to trust, even if we have not seen and touched? Blessed, joyful trust is what this Sunday is all about. Forget the discomfort that the pews gave you and the kneelers, and the extreme length of the passion story, and the fact that you really could not hear the second reader because of the microphones, and so on. If nothing else, simply know that you and I are like Thomas. We so much want the Jesus story to be true that we turn our faces away from it, choosing distraction instead. Yet the story is not “incredible!” at all. Jesus’ suffering and diminishment and death give way to the deeper reality of love. Yes, Death wins. But the quiet of love undercuts that win

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

1. How could the early Christians “sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one’s needs”? Pope Francis says they “received mercy and lived with mercy: This is not some ideology: it is Christianity.” Is it time to eliminate all inequalities and heal injustice?
2. Hans Urs von Balthasar said the following: “We are not the ones who grasp Christ and anchor ourselves to him. Rather, Christ has caught up with us and grasped us.” Which “grasping” makes you feel more secure? How does von Balthasar’s sentence relate to this sentence from this reading: “God ... gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection ?
3. “Jesus came in, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst.” Can any doors be locked tight enough to keep Christ out? Explain. Do you have any “locked doors”? How is peace connected with forgiveness of sins?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another’s openness and sensitivity. Conclude with the following: God of everlasting mercy, who in the very recurrence of the paschal feast kindle the faith of the people you have made your own, increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed, that all may grasp and rightly understand in what font they have been washed, by whose Spirit they have been reborn, by whose Blood they have been redeemed. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

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Prayer to St. Michael

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God,
thrust into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen