

# Christ Our Light Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston  
9677 HIGHWAY 6 • NAVASOTA, TEXAS

**OFFICES AND MAILING ADDRESS**  
**510 Manley Street • Navasota, TX 77868**

**Phone: 936-825-3920 • Fax: 936-825-7612**

**Religious Education: 936-825-1869**

**After hour emergencies: 936-825-3920**

## **PARISH OFFICE HOURS**

### **Monday-Thursday**

9:15am - noon & 1:00pm - 5:00pm

**Friday 9:15am- noon**

Other times by appointment

**Website: [www.christourlight.org](http://www.christourlight.org)**

## **PASTORAL STAFF**

Pastor Rev. Elias Lopéz  
Grant Holt, Permanent Deacon

Garry Janota, Permanent Deacon

Russell Pasket, Permanent Deacon

Gregory Jelinek, MD, Permanent Deacon (Retired)

## **ADMINISTRATION & BOOKKEEPER**

Nelda Kurten

## **COORDINATOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Carolyn Katkoski

## **DIRECTOR OF LITURGY AND MUSIC**

Susan Russell

## **SACRISTAN**

Samuel Pry

## **PASTORAL LEADERSHIP TEAM**

Michael Culver (Chairperson), Teresa Morales, Jason Katkoski, Laura Quirino,  
and Sam Pry

## **FINANCE COUNCIL**

Teresa Morales, Carolyn Katkoski, Jose Coronilla

## **DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN**

Deacon Grant Holt, Jason Katkoski, Bill Heathcott, Gregorio Gonzalez

## **RE BOARD**

President: Brandi Tejeda, Vice President: Jessica Herrera

Secretary: Teresa Morales, Board Members: Lucy Coronilla, Jason Katkoski,  
Allyson Sweeney, Den Grant Holt

## **BUILDING COMMITTEE**

Deacon Grant Holt, Danny Clark, Richard Krolczyk, and Joe Rangel

## **YOUTH MINISTER COORDINATOR**

Jessica Herrera

## **SUNDAY EUCHARIST**

Saturday Vigil: 6:00pm

Sunday: (English) 8:00am

Sunday: (Spanish) 1:00pm

## **WEEKDAY EUCHARIST**

First Saturday 9am

Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 8:30am

Tuesday 6:00pm (English)

Thursday 6:00pm (Spanish)

## **ROSARY PRAYED IN COMMON**

Tuesday & Thursday: 5:40pm

Wednesday & Friday: 8:10am

Saturday: 5:15pm

Sunday: 7:15am & 12:15pm

## **RECONCILIATION/CONFESSION**

Tuesday, Thursday and

2nd & 4th Saturdays 5:00-5:45pm

and by appointment 936-825-3920

## **RECONCILIACION/CONFESIONES**

Los Martes, jueves y el

segundo y cuarto sábado a las 5:00-5:45pm

y por cita 936-825-3920

**April 24, 2022 - Second Sunday of Easter (or Sunday of Divine Mercy)**



# Christ Our Light Catholic Church • Navasota, Texas

April 23 & 24, 2022

Under the Patronage of St. Patrick and Our Lady of Guadalupe

## MASS SCHEDULE & INTENTION

### MONDAY, APRIL 25

No Mass

### TUESDAY, APRIL 26

6:00 PM Josh Torres, Birthday

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27

8:30 AM Cecil Wilde †

### THURSDAY, APRIL 28

8:30 AM Leo Malek, Jr. †

10:00 AM Navasota Rehab. — Frs. Intention

6:00 PM\* Special Intention

### FRIDAY, APRIL 29

8:30 AM Harry Krusleski †

### SATURDAY, APRIL 30

8:30 PM James Lawrence †

### SUNDAY, MAY 01

8:00 AM Benefactor's of Memorial Fund

1:00 PM\* Special Intention

\*Spanish

## THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

### MONDAY, APRIL 25

5:00 PM Spanish, Legion of Mary, Cry room, CH

6:00 PM to 8:00 PM, Bible Study, SPH

### TUESDAY, APRIL 26

5:00 PM to 5:45 PM Confession, CH

7:00 PM English Choir Practice, CH

### THURSDAY, APRIL 28

12:00 PM English Legion of Mary, Cry room, CH

5:00 PM to 5:45 PM Confession, CH

7:00 PM Spanish Choir Practice, CH

### FRIDAY, APRIL 28

5:30 AM TMIY Men's Group, SPH

### SATURDAY, APRIL 30

9:00 AM Quinceañera Class, SPH

Christ Our Light Catholic Church



The Architecture of Christendom - Houston

The Church is open every day from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. for people to come stop by and Pray.

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**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COUNCIL 9367 — 2022  
SCHOLARSHIP**

The Navasota Knights of Columbus 9367 — 2022 Scholarship applications are available to any graduating high school student of Christ Our Light Catholic Church/St. Stanislaus Catholic Church. Application may be picked up during regular business hours at either parish office. All application are due by 5:00 PM Tuesday, May 18, 2022/

## E-Mail Addresses for the Parish

To e-mail Fr. Elias...fr.eli@christourlight.org

To e-mail Nelda: nelda@christourlight.org

To e-mail RE Board: reboard@christourlight.org

Christ Our Light web-site: www.christourlight.org

## BULLETIN DEADLINE TUESDAY 12:00 NOON

Announcements and or articles are to be submitted in writing to the Parish Office, or faxed to 825-7612 or e-mailed nelda@christourlight.org.

Events, meeting etc. for the Parish Calendar are to be submitted in writing to the Parish Office in advance.

## AFTER MASS WEEKLY PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deadline Tuesday, 12:00 Noon. Announcements are to be submitted in writing to the Parish Office. The Pastor reserves the right to pick and choose which announcements are made in this forum as there is a need to keep these to a minimum.

Todos los anuncios deben ser presentados por escrito en la oficina de la parroquia no mas tarde que los martes al mediodía. El Pastor decidirá si las noticias son de importancia para ser pronuncia das.

## PARISH REGISTRATION

To our new parishioner, we welcome you to Christ Our Light Parish. Please register at the parish office or ask one of the Hospitality Ministers to help you. For parishioners moving out of the parish or changing your address or phone number, **please** notify the parish office, 825-3920.

## Sacrament of Baptism Schedule

**English Baptism Class Schedule for 2022: 8:30 AM to 10:30 AM. PARTICIPANTS MUST REGISTER AT LEAST 1 WEEK PRIOR TO CLASS. To register please contact Deacon Grant Holt at 936-825-6448.**

**Spanish Baptism Class Schedule for 2022: 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM, Apr. 24, July 24 & October 23. For Information, call Rosa Torres at 936-419-8974 or Felisa Paz at 979-255-4361.**



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**ALL DOCUMENTS AND FORMS** must be completed and turned in before Baptism Date. **SCHEDULED** Baptism will be celebrated at 11:30 AM in Spanish every 2nd Saturday and at 11:30 AM in English every 4th Saturday, following completion of the baptismal classes the prior month and **Fr. Eli has been informed in advance.** The Sacrament of Baptism is a communal celebration. Therefore, private baptisms are not celebrated here.





**PRAY for THE CONTINUING  
RECOVERY OR COMFORT OF  
the infirmed and homebound  
members of our community.**

Sarafina Alo, Scott Beddingfield, Leonard Busa, Andrew Castillo, Jo Ann Clepper, Frank Crouch, Elizabeth Culmer, Herman Culmer, Eva Estrada, Liz Estrada, Lois Finke, Fabryna Hitchcock, Liz Johnson, Rachel Kammel, Mary Ann Knowles, Liz Kubricht, Glenda Lawrence, John Lawrence, Nancy Lopez, Christian Mills, Leslie Mills, France Munoz, Delia Nunez, Anita Olguin, Julian Olguin, Leona Pasket, Cecelia Pearson, Angelina Peterson, Wallace Peterson, Irene Ramirez, Lucila Rivera, Zek Rueda, Rosalinda Salazar, Josh Sechelski, Sherrie Shiflett, Dana Sowell, Lydia Torres, Jessie Torres, Robert Mario Torres, Jessie Valadez, III, Crystal Winkler, David Woehler.

Call the parish office when a member of our community has a need to be remembered in prayer, 825-3920.

Also, if you have added a name to the prayer list, please call to let us know when to remove the name from the list.  
*Thank you.*

**New Memorial Candles**



The new Candle Stands are electrical. Anyone wanting to light a candle may do so by pressing the red button and give an offering. The candle will burn for 12 hours. Memorial Candles burning for one year are \$150.00 each. Come by the parish office to schedule and pay your offering of \$150.00 for your Memorial candle.



**YOUR PARISH  
SUPPORT  
SU APOYO  
PARROQUIAL**

***TRESASURE YOU HAVE SHARED:***

**GIFTS FOR GOD — YOUR TITHE REPONDS**

**April 15, 2022 — Good Friday**

**(31) Envelopes, Loose Checks, On Line Giving,  
Mail Ins. Drop Ins. 1,171.01**

**April 16 & 17, 2022**

**(79) Offertory Envelopes/Loose Checks, On Line  
Giving, Mail Ins. Drop Ins 6,907.94  
Children 112.00  
Easter Offering 904.00  
Maintenance Fund 240.00**

Thank you thank you for Mailing, Bringing in, and On Line Giving your Offertory. Baskets will be passed during the Offertory. Baskets will also be passed when we have a II Collection.

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**II Collection**

**April 23 & 24 — Archdiocese Home Mission**

**In Our Prayers**

We remember in prayer our friends and loved ones in active military duty, both in and out of harms way, in the service of their our country. Pray for peace in the world and for our leaders.

SSG Jorge Aguilar, Jr., Alexander Cortez, Jesus Cortez, Spec., Sgn, Jason Malek, Antonio Magallon, Jose Rene Milan, Christopher Munoz, Javier Salinas, Shelby Seale, SSgt Allen Thane

**OUR HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTIONS  
FOR APRIL**

**Intention for health care workers — We pray for health care workers who serve the sick and the elderly, especially in the poorest countries; may they be adequately supported by governments and local communities.**



**P.E.R.A. (Perpetual Eucharistic  
Reparative Adoration)**

*Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament has resumed on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. following the 8:30 AM Masses and will be reposed at 9:00 PM on Wednesdays, Thursdays at 5:45 PM before the 6:00 PM Spanish Mass and Friday at 5:00 PM*

*The "Church and the world have a great need for Eucharistic worship. Jesus awaits us in this sacrament of love. Let us not refuse the time to go to meet him in adoration, in contemplation full of faith, and open to make amends for the serious offenses and crimes of the world. Let our adoration never cease."*

**Please call Mary Rangel @ 936-419-9024 to sign up for a time slot on Thursdays.**

**THE CATHOLIC FAITH ON DEMAND  
Web site is FORMED.ORG  
The Parish Code to access the website is  
MVMZKF**

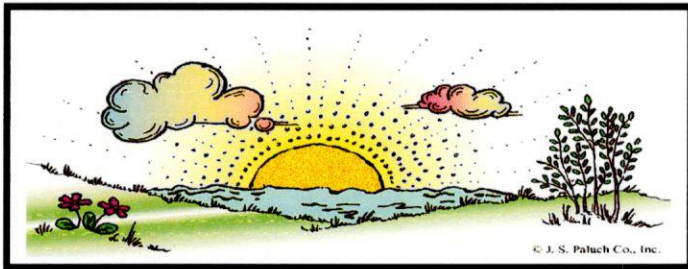
**There are 2 easy ways to connect to  
FLOCKNOTE (pick one):**

**Then register to create an account.**

**NOTE: Do not use Mozilla Firefox browser.**

- 1. Visit our church at: [www.flocknote.com/christourlightchurch](http://www.flocknote.com/christourlightchurch)**
- 2. Text SPOLG to 84576 from your phone to subscribe to updates.**





**Second Sunday of Easter  
(or Sunday of Divine Mercy)  
April 24, 2022**

**Once I was dead, but now I am alive forever and  
ever.  
—Revelation 1:18a**

**BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES**

Every 1st weekend of the month (Saturday Vigil and Sunday Masses) blessing of all who have a birthday or Wedding Anniversary during the month.

**MONTHLY REFRESHMENTS AFTER MASSES**

Refreshment will be served after Masses the first Sunday of each month. The refreshments and service will be provided by the following:

Altar Society—January and July  
Pastoral Council—February and October  
Finance Council—March and September  
R.E. Board—April and August  
Stewardship—May and November  
Choir—June and December

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**PLEASE PRAY FOR VOCATIONS**

**to the Priesthood and Religious Life especially in our Archdiocese.**

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**STEWARDSHIP REFLECTIONS**

**Sunday of Divine Mercy** — *“Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’” John 20:21* Peace — the first gift of the risen Lord. Just as Jesus sent the apostles out into the world, so too, He sends us. As disciples of Jesus, we are called to be compassionate and merciful; and not with just those who are our friends, but also with our “enemies.” Think of someone in your life who you need to reconcile with. Call them right now or better, yet, go visit them.

**MEMORIALIZING THE SANCTUARY CANDLE**

If you are interested in memorializing the Sanctuary candle, in memory of, in personal reverence and petition or Special Intention for the week, stop by the parish office for more information.

**REFLEXIONES DEL BOLETIN DE CORRESPONSABILIDAD.**

**Domingo de la Divina Misericordia** — *“Jesús les dijo nuevamente, ‘La paz sea con ustedes. Como el Padre me ha enviado, así los envío yo’.” Juan 20:21* La paz — el primer don del Señor resucitado. Así como Jesús envió a los discípulos al mundo, así también nos envía a nosotros. Como discípulos de Jesús, somos llamados a ser compasivos y misericordiosos; no sólo con nuestros amigos sino también con nuestros “enemigos”. Piense de alguien en su vida con quien necesite reconciliarse. Llámelo inmediatamente o mejor aún, vaya a visitarlo.

**ParishSOFT Giving**      **SIGN UP NOW**

**Sign Up for Christ Our Light  
Online Giving Now**

Christ Our Light now accepts online giving. Parish Soft is our parish's online giving program. Enroll at the link below. It is secure and easy to use. You will be able to use Parish Soft for normal tithing and special collections throughout the year. Apps are available, so your cell phones/tablets can be used for online giving.

<https://giving.parishsoft.com/dl?uid=chri510191>

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**LA SOCIEDAD DE SAN VICENTE DE PAUL  
CRISTO EL BUEN PASTOR  
NAVASOTA/ANDERSON**

Somos una organización religiosa, sin ánimo de lucro, que presta servicios sociales a personas necesitadas. Nuestro número de teléfono es

**936-873-5002**

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**THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL  
CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD  
NAVASOTA/ANDERSON**

We are a non-profit, faith-based organization providing social services to people in need. We can be reached at 936-873-5002.



# IGNITE

**Ignite Parish Goal \$208,632.00**  
**Gifts Amount Received \$75,847.00**  
**39 Donors**

## 2022 DIOCESAN SERVICE FUND

**DSF Goal 26,200.00**  
**Gifts Received**  
**Gifts Received \$12,657.00**  
**37 Doner**

### MARY A BIBLICAL WALK with the BLESSED MOTHER

An 8 week Study Through the biblical Narrative of Mary's life.  
You will be introduced to the Blessed Mother on a personal level  
and will see how Scripture, History, and Jewish culture reveal  
the sorrows, anxieties, and joys Mary would have held in her heart.

Narrated by Dr. Edward Sri and filmed in the Holy Land

Classes begin:  
Monday, April 25th 2022 and continue until Monday, June 20, 2022  
6:00 pm – 8:00pm  
St. Patrick's Hall at 510 Manley Street

To register please contact Helen Kimball at [helen.kimball@outlook.com](mailto:helen.kimball@outlook.com) or call 832-771-3001.  
Helen will order the study guides, cost is \$27.00.



The Spring start of the men's program called That Man is you! (TMIY) Session 14-26 has started. Weekly meeting are held on Friday Mornings 5:30 AM to 7:00 AM. In St. Patrick Hall, 510 Manley Street Christ Our Light. That Man is You is an interactive men's program that combines the latest findings of modern science with the teaching of the Church and the wisdom of the saints to develop authentic male leaders capable of transforming themselves, their families and greater society. Join us for food, fellowship, and faith Fridays at 5:30 am. We will be done by 7:00 am. All men are welcome. Learn more at [tmiy.org](http://tmiy.org) or call/text Mike Kimball at 281-923-8314.

We need volunteers for the following ministries: Parish Council, Finance Council, and English Baptism Coordinator. Please pray and consider offering your time, talent and treasure to serve our parishioners. Thank you for all you do. Please contact Fr. Eli or Nelda Kurten at the parish office.

St. Matthias Catholic Church Annual Bazaar — Come hungry and join us Sunday, May 1st, 11am-5pm at the Church, 302 FM1774, Magnolia, TX 77355. There will be a delicious barbeque dinner with all the trimmings, take out available, and so many food choices. Live music provided by The Lonely Road Band, Enjoy the raffle, live and virtual silent auctions, Mexican Bingo, midway games, inflatables and so much more. You will share a fun day with your family. All proceeds from our annual event will go to the St. Matthias capital campaign for our new church. For additional information call 281-356-2000.



# DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

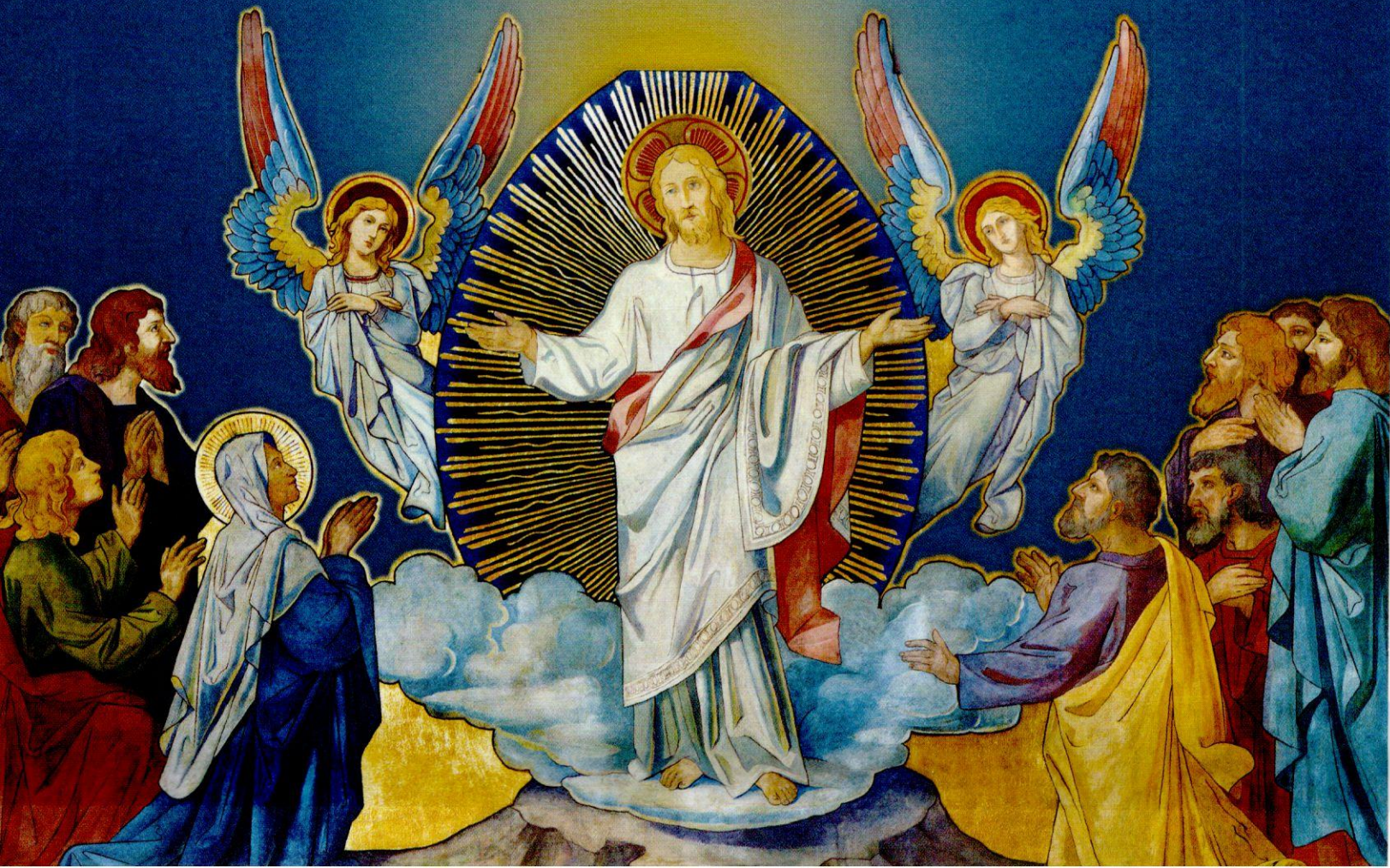
GOD'S MERCY IS FOR EVERYONE, ALWAYS

As we celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday, Pope Francis reminds us that "Jesus said to St. Faustina, 'be merciful to everyone always' (December 24, 1937). *To everyone*: let us not think only of our interests, our vested interests. Now, while we are looking forward to a slow and arduous recovery from the pandemic, there is a danger that we will forget those who are left behind. The risk is that then we may be struck by an even worse virus, that of *selfish indifference*—a virus spread by the thought that life is better if it is better *for me*, and that everything will be fine if it is fine *for me*. It begins there and ends up selecting one person over another, discarding the poor, and sacrificing those left behind on the altar of progress.

"The present pandemic reminds us that there are no differences or borders between those who suffer. We are all frail, all equal, all precious. May we be profoundly shaken by what is happening all around us: the time has come to eliminate inequalities, to heal the injustice

that is undermining the health of the entire human family! Let us learn from the early Christian community described in the Acts of the Apostles. It received mercy and lived with mercy: 'All who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need' (Acts 2:44-45). This is not some ideology: it is Christianity.

"In mercy, we find proof of how God loves us. God gives his entire self, always, freely, asking nothing in return. The salvation God offers us is the work of God's mercy and is for everyone. No human efforts, however good they may be, can enable us to merit so great a gift. God draws us to himself and makes us one with him. We too can love others as God has loved us, giving our lives for one another. Whoever experiences divine mercy, is impelled to be an architect of mercy among the least and the poor. Let us receive mercy and let us give mercy."





## St. Faustina's Mission

Polish born Helena Kowalska (1905–1938), was the third of ten children. When almost twenty, she entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, became Sr. Maria Faustina and devoted her life to the message of God's mercy. She traced her spiritual experiences with Christ in her diary, *Divine Mercy in My Soul*. She was canonized in 2000.

St. Faustina's life-long dedication to God's mercy was the direct result of her mystic encounter with Jesus, who gave her this mission. "Today I am sending you with my mercy to the people of the whole world. Speak to the world about my mercy. Let all mankind recognize my unfathomable mercy. Let them have recourse to the fount of my mercy. Let them profit from the blood and water which gushed forth for them. Before I come as a just judge, I first open wide the doors of my mercy. One who refuses to pass through the doors of my mercy must pass through the doors of my justice. Mankind will not have peace until it turns with trust to my mercy."

## St. Faustina's Prayer

I want to be completely  
transformed into your mercy  
and to be your living reflection, O Lord.  
Help me, that my eyes may be merciful,  
so I may never suspect  
or judge from appearances,  
but look for what is beautiful  
in my neighbors' souls  
and come to their rescue.  
Help me, that my ears may be merciful,  
so I may heed my neighbors' needs  
and not be indifferent to their pains.  
Help me, that my tongue may be merciful,  
so I should never  
speak negatively of my neighbor,  
but have a word  
of comfort and forgiveness.  
Help me, that my hands may be merciful  
and filled with good deeds,  
so I may do only good to my neighbors  
by doing the difficult tasks.  
Help me, that my heart may be merciful  
so I may feel all the sufferings of my neighbor.  
Jesus, I trust in you!

## OUR MISSION TODAY: WITNESSING TO GOD'S MERCY

In *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis reminded us that the Church, which means each of us its members, is called to witness to the power of God's mercy to transform us and our world.

"The Church is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative and has loved us first (1 John 4:19). Therefore we can move forward, boldly taking the initiative, going out to others, seeking those who have fallen away, standing at the crossroads and welcoming the outcast. Such a community has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of its own experience of the power of God's infinite mercy. Let us try a little harder to take the first step and to become involved by word and deed in people's daily lives, to bridge distances, to embrace human life and to touch the suffering flesh of Christ in others."

"Today there is need for people to be witnesses to God's mercy and tenderness. So many situations require our comforting witness. I am thinking of those burdened by suffering, injustice and tyranny; of those enslaved to money, to power, to success, to worldliness. We are all called to comfort our brothers and sisters, to testify that God alone can eliminate the causes of existential and spiritual tragedies. Any environment, even the furthest and most impractical, can become a place where our witness can bear fruit. There are no situations or places precluded from our Christian presence and witness. The witness that Jesus asks of us is not closed, but is open. It is in our hands."

### What can each of us do today to be more merciful as Jesus was?

- *Whom have I 'infected' with my faith and trust in God?*
- *How many people have I encouraged with my hope for a better life for all?*
- *How much love have I shared with those in my life?*
- *How might I take the first step to heal some broken relationship?*
- *How might I act to change in some small way the injustice I see around me?*



April 24, 2022

## Sunday of Divine Mercy

Acts 5:12-16 | Rev 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19 | Jn 20:19-31

### **GROW** AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

In today's Gospel, Thomas gets singled out as the one who doubts that Jesus had risen from the dead. But the other Gospels reveal that the other disciples doubted too. I understand why they had trouble believing that Jesus was alive. To think that God loves us enough that he chose to become human to die for our sins is incomprehensible. To accept that he loves us this deeply is almost unbearable. It seems doubtful anyone can love us that much. It seems doubtful that we deserve to be loved that much. It is much easier to doubt than to believe. But Thomas was the first to publicly proclaim the man Jesus as also God: *My Lord and my God!* he says. The risen Jesus had come into the room, although the doors were locked, and called them back into belief. Through Christ, God shows the disciples – and us – the extent of his love and mercy. We are worth it, even when we doubt, even when we fail. His death and resurrection are testament to that. He will walk through whatever walls exist to tell us. No doubt about it.

### **GO** EVANGELIZE

#### PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

The reading from the Acts of the Apostles today describes the reaction to the apostles' joyful and confident proclamation that Jesus was Lord and God after receiving the Holy Spirit. The crowds drew near just to have Peter's shadow fall upon those who were sick. God's mercy has no bounds. How can we be like the first disciples? In what ways do our lives reflect God's mercy on us? Where can our own "shadows fall" so that God's goodness and grace can bring healing and comfort to others? Let us begin our days by giving "thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting," and trust that the Holy Spirit will both remind us of our blessings and continued need for mercy, and guide us to encounters with others who need the same.

**PRAY** During this Easter season, read a passage from the Acts of the Apostles each day and immerse yourself in the history of the early Church. End your time of reflection by praying the Apostles' Creed, the statement of beliefs of Christians in the first centuries after Jesus' death and resurrection.



# Sunday Connection



God speaks to us in many ways, including through the Sunday Scripture readings. The Sunday Connection provides useful background and activities to better understand the upcoming Sunday's Scripture readings, helping you to connect the Scripture to daily life in a meaningful way.

## Second Sunday of Easter, Cycle C (or Sunday of Divine Mercy)

Sunday, April 24, 2022

### Background on the Gospel Reading

Today's reading, from the Gospel of John, is proclaimed on the second Sunday of Easter in each of the three Sunday Lectionary cycles. This should alert us to the significance of the encounters with the resurrected Jesus described in this reading. This Gospel combines two scenes: Jesus' appearance to his disciples after his Resurrection and Jesus' dialogue with Thomas, the disciple who doubted.

Part of the mystery of Jesus' Resurrection is that he appeared to his disciples not as a spirit but in bodily form. We do not know exactly what this form was like. Earlier in John's Gospel, when Mary of Magdala first encountered the risen Jesus, she did not recognize the figure standing before her until Jesus spoke her. In Luke's Gospel, the disciples walking on the road to Emmaus did not recognize Jesus until he broke bread with them. We know from readings such as today's that in his resurrected body, Jesus was no longer bound by space; he appeared to the disciples in spite of the locked door. And yet, on this resurrected body, the disciples could still observe the marks of his Crucifixion.

In today's Gospel, Jesus greets his disciples with the gift of peace and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus also commissions his disciples to continue the work that he has begun. As Jesus was sent by God, so too does Jesus send his disciples. This continuity with Jesus' own mission is an essential element of the Church. Jesus grants the means to accomplish this mission when he gives his disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit binds us together as a community of faith and strengthens us to bear witness to Jesus' Resurrection.

Jesus' words to his disciples also highlight the integral connection between the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Forgiveness and reconciliation are gifts to us from Jesus. With the grace of the Holy Spirit, we can share these with others. This is another essential aspect of what it means to be Christ's Church. The Church continues Jesus' ministry of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Thomas, the disciple who doubts, represents the reality of the Church that comes after this first community of disciples. All but the first disciples of Jesus must believe without seeing. Like Thomas, we may doubt the news that Jesus, who was crucified and buried, appeared to his disciples. It is part of our human nature to seek hard evidence that the Jesus who appeared to the disciples after his death is, indeed, the same Jesus who was crucified. Thomas is given the opportunity to be our representative who obtains this evidence. He gives witness to us that the Jesus who was raised is the same Jesus who had died. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, we are among those who are blessed for we have not seen and yet have believed.



## Gracious Givers

### *Lay Reader Message*

### **The Fields Are Ripe**

Easter is the most joyous, the most victorious celebration of the church year. It is an opportune time for us as stewards to "*Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples*" (Psalm 96:3)! What deed can be more marvelous than the resurrection of our Lord from the dead? Yes, "*Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep*" (1 Corinthians 15:20), and we, too, shall be raised from the dead to live with him forever in Heaven.

As stewards of the Gospel, we have this good news to tell. Jesus reminded us of the urgency of the proclamation of his redemption. We read in John 4:35 that Jesus said, "*Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.*" There is a need for us to tell this message effectively, passionately, clearly, and with perseverance so that all may be led by God's grace to respond to Christ's gift of salvation.

Along with pronouncing this good news with our own lips, we have a responsibility to give. We respond to the needs of others by taking groceries to our food banks, by contributing funds to be used for helping families with various financial difficulties, by sending money to areas hit by natural disasters, such as floods and hurricanes. What greater need is there than to provide financial support for those who minister to the greatest need of all ... the spiritual needs of Jesus' lost sheep? Our giving should be done willingly, cheerfully, generously, even as God in Christ has given to us.

Jesus promised that, as we carry out his commission to "*...make disciples of all nations ...*" he will be with us "*...to the very end of the age*" (Matthew 28:19, 20). Paul reminded us that "*God is able to make all grace abound to [us], so that in all things at all times, having all that [we] need, [we] will abound in every good work*" (2 Corinthians 9:8). Every day, the Holy Spirit provides opportunities for us as stewards to tell the good news and to give according to our abilities that the message of God's love in Christ may be spread throughout the world. Easter is our reason: Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!



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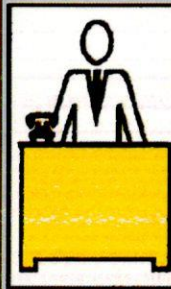
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puts on ADVERTISED clothes  
drinks a cup  
of ADVERTISED coffee  
drives to work  
in an ADVERTISED car  
and then ....  
refuses to ADVERTISE  
believing it doesn't pay.  
Later if business is poor  
he ADVERTISES it for sale.  
**WHY IS IT?**