

Divine Mercy Sunday April 24, 2022
Our Lady of Perpetual Help

First Reading: Acts 5:12-16

12 Now many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. 13 None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high honor. 14 And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, 15 so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. 16 The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

Responsorial Psalm: PS 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-2

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

or:

R. Alleluia.

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

or:

R. Alleluia.

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

or:

R. Alleluia.

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

or:

R. Alleluia.

rejoice and be glad.

or:

R. Alleluia.

Second Reading: Revelation 1:9-13, 17-19

9 I John, your brother, who share with you in Jesus

the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet 11 saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." 12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden girdle round his breast. ...17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand upon me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, 18 and the living one; I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. 19 Now write what you see, what is and what is to take place hereafter.

Gospel: John 20:19-31

19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." 24 Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe." 26 Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but

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believing.” 28 Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” 29 Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.” 30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing 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

Easter has come, the stone has been rolled away, the work of salvation finished! Now it is time to receive marching orders, now is the time for us to assume the mission. In all of this week's readings we have some aspect of empowerment for mission; the Holy Spirit is given, the Word is sent, the disciples have been imbued with miraculous power. Why? So that they might go forth into the world with the message of salvation even as Jesus went forth into the world; "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." The story is told of an imaginary conversation that took place between St. Michael and Jesus after his ascension into heaven. St. Michael asked, "Jesus, now that you have returned to heaven what are your plans for reaching the world with the Good News?" Jesus replied, "I've given the task to my disciples." St. Michael, knowing that the disciples were "unlearned and ignorant" people, asked, "What is your back-up plan if they fail?" Jesus replied, "I have no back-up plan!" And so it is, Jesus fully entrusted the task of world evangelization to us, his Church. When Jesus appeared to the Church he gave them peace, he gave them purpose, and he gave them power—and he gave them a mission. We believe and have just recently celebrated that we too were there at the cross, fully included in the saving work of Christ. It is essential that we understand that we were also there, fully included in the commission which Christ gave to his followers. If we profess our inclusion in the first truth and deny our inclusion in the second truth, we deceive ourselves. Full experience of the saving work of Christ propels believers to willingly participate in the mission of Christ. It (salvation) is the cause that brings about the effect; (a desire to share the Good News). If there is no urgency or willingness to participate in the mission we must question whether we have fully experienced and understood the gift of salvation. In Pope Paul VI's words, "It is unthinkable that a person should accept the Word and give himself to the kingdom without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in his turn." (Evangelii Nuntiandi, 24)

Thomas gives us some great insight into the chemistry of believing. He did not say, "I cannot believe," but rather, "I will not believe." He had more evidence than we do but he willed to not believe. Consequently, Jesus sought Thomas, offered evidence of his resurrection, and invited him to conversion: "Do not be faithless but believe." And Thomas did believe. In like manner Jesus commissions us to go forth into our world to offer nonbelievers the opportunity to believe and experience conversion. "Adult faith is clearly and explicitly rooted in a personal relationship with Jesus lived in the Christian community. 'The Christian faith is, above all, conversion to Jesus Christ, full and sincere adherence to his person and the decision to walk in his footsteps.' Our understanding of the person and the way of Jesus continues to grow by our meditation on the word of God, by prayer and sacrament, by our efforts to follow Jesus' example, and by the sure guidance of the Church's teachings." (Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us, 55)

The responsibility is ours, we cannot and should not attempt to shirk it. "To the question, 'why mission?' we reply with the Church's faith and experience that true liberation consist in opening oneself to the love of Christ. In him, and only in him, are we set free from all alienation and doubt, from slavery to the power of sin and death. ... Mission is an issue of faith, an accurate indicator of our faith in Christ and his love for us. "Those who are incorporated in the Catholic Church ought to sense their privilege and for that very reason their greater obligation of bearing witness to the faith and to the Christian life as a service to their brothers and sisters and as a fitting response to God." (Mission of the Redeemer, 11)

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INVITATION TO REFLECT

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

First Reading

1. How do you see Christ's power manifested today in the lives of people?

Second Reading

2. How does John's experience with the risen Christ affect your experience with the risen Christ?

Gospel Reading

3. To whom is the commission given in verse 21?
4. Explain what you believe about your having been sent forth by Jesus.
5. To what extent are you able to identify with Thomas?

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 a final prayer