

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER (OR SUNDAY OF DIVINE MERCY)

April 27, 2025

By Al Mansfield

Acts 5: 12-16

Psalm 118

Revelation 1: 9-11, 12-13

John 20: 19-31

FAITH IN DIVINE MERCY

This Sunday has been called by many names. Perhaps the earliest was The Octave of Easter. It was also called *Dominica in albis*, referring to the practice of the newly baptized at Easter laying aside their white baptismal garments on this day. It has also been known as *Quasimodo* Sunday, after the Introit verse in Latin ("As newborn babes, crave pure spiritual milk"). It was also popularly called "Low Sunday," in contrast to the "high" celebration of Easter a week ago.

Nowadays, today is simply called the Second Sunday of Easter or Sunday of Divine Mercy (from the revelations of Divine Mercy to St. Faustina). The theme of faith runs through the liturgy today, encouraging us to reach out for God's mercy with great faith and trust.

ACTS

The Holy Spirit, sent by the risen Jesus as he promised, worked through the apostles to perform many signs and wonders among the people. The early Christian community was held in great esteem by the people, and many believers were added to them. Healings and deliverances worked through the apostles demonstrated the power of the risen Christ.

The Responsorial is Psalm 118, used frequently during the Easter Season. It is a victory chant for the Lord's resurrection. "The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. By the Lord has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes."

REVELATION

Our second reading is from the beginning of the Book of Revelation. John is exiled on the island of Patmos for proclaiming the word of God and giving testimony to Jesus.

The seven lampstands represent seven churches in Asia Minor. Jesus is depicted in all his glory in the midst of the lampstands - the risen Jesus present in his Church. Jesus says to John and to us: "Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last, the one who lives. Once I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever."

GOSPEL

Though the first and second readings of this Sunday change over a three-year cycle, the gospel remains the same: the account of Jesus appearing to the apostles on Easter Sunday and again, a week later. Thomas was absent from the Easter apparition, and was very vocal in expressing his doubt about the resurrection. One week later, however, Thomas was present when Jesus appeared again and invited him to physically examine his wounds.

Thomas' response of faith is "My Lord and my God!" That occasions Jesus' saying: "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed." Meaning, of course, all of us believers who have come after Thomas!

It bears mentioning that, although the noun "faith" does not occur in John's gospel, some form of the verb "to believe" appears over 100 times. The lesson here is that "believing" is active and not static!

GROWTH IN FAITH

The Introit verse, taken from 1 Peter 2:2, exhorts us to crave the milk of God's word as newborn infants, so that we may grow up to salvation. The first reading from Acts speaks about the early Church growing in numbers as more believers were constantly added to them.

In the second reading from Revelation, John is exiled for preaching God's word and bearing witness to Jesus - in other words, suffering for his faith in Jesus. The overall theme is one of faith that Jesus is risen and lives now no more to die.

There are many crises around us today, but perhaps none more serious as the crisis of faith in Jesus Christ as risen Lord and Savior, which is necessary to be saved. As St. Paul has told us: "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved" (Rom. 10:9).

"Blessed are those who have not seen me but still believe" (Alleluia Verse).