

WALK BY FAITH

By Al Mansfield

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER (DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY)

Acts 2:42-47

Psalm 118

1 Peter 1:3-9

John 20:19-31

WALKING BY FAITH

I have heard it said that the most difficult article of faith to accept is that God loves each of us personally with an infinite love and extends his gracious mercy to us even after all our sins, infidelities, and betrayals. Today's liturgy, one week after Easter, emphasizes the great truth of Divine Mercy and the need to exercise our faith and trust in the salvation purchased by the Precious Blood of Jesus.

ACTS

Our first reading gives us an insight into the life of the primitive Christian community. "They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers." It indicates that "wonders and signs" - miraculous acts - were performed by the apostles. Obviously, this created a sense of awe in those who witnessed them.

We are told of the remarkable charity and generosity that characterized the early Church: "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."

The first Christians shone like a light to the society around them. They enjoyed the favor and good will of the people, "And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved." The early Church grew and spread by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit working in their midst!

1 PETER

The second reading from the First Letter of Peter proclaims all the great themes we celebrate today - "great mercy...new birth (newly baptized)...a birth unto hope...the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead... guarded with God's power there for us."

The reading then speaks about suffering through many trials. It previews today's gospel when it says: "Although you have never seen him, you love him, and without seeing him, you believe in him."

The selection concludes on a note of "inexpressible joy" - Easter joy! Alleluia!

GOSPEL

The first part of today's gospel reading recounts the Easter Sunday apparition of Jesus, when he breathed on the apostles and imparted the Holy Spirit with the power to forgive sins.

The second part of the gospel is the very familiar account of "Doubting Thomas," who was absent from the group at the time of the apparition of Jesus on Easter Sunday. Thomas makes his famous declaration of doubt: "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."

That brings us to today, a week later, when Thomas was present with the apostles. Jesus again appears and invites 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." Then Thomas makes his famous declaration of faith, "My Lord and my God!"

Jesus addresses all of us who have come after Thomas: "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

FAITH, NOT SIGHT

St. Paul says that "we walk by faith and not by sight." The old saying is "seeing is believing," but in a real sense we could also say that "believing is seeing." Faith gives us supernatural sight. As we exercise our faith and trust in Divine Mercy, revealed in God's word, we develop our spiritual vision.

We are indeed blessed because, even though we have not seen Jesus with our physical eyes, we have seen him with our eyes of faith, and have believed.

O blood and water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of mercy for us, I trust in you!