

Deacon Mark Gannaway

Acts 2:42-47

1 Pt 1:3-9

Jn 20:19-31

April 12, 2026

Sunday of Divine Mercy

Welcome to The Second Sunday of Easter, also designated as Sunday of Divine Mercy. A new solemnity, instituted by John Paul II on April 30, 2000, the year of the Great Jubilee, the day he canonized Saint Faustina who died in 1938 at the age of thirty-three. Jesus over an 8-year period, revealed himself to her when she was Sister Faustina in a convent in Poland. One of those visions was the Divine Mercy Novena, which Jesus asked Sister Faustina to pray for nine days, beginning on Good Friday and ending on the Saturday after Easter, the eve of the Octave of Easter.

Divine Mercy Sunday is also the day we celebrate our Gospel reading when Jesus revealed himself to Thomas, showing his wounds of his final sufferings on the Cross. The day Thomas went all in on his Mission with the other apostles, who just a week earlier was skeptical. This is the day they received the Holy Spirit from their teacher and their Lord and Savior. Now they were empowered and ready at all costs, to spread the Good News, that Jesus lives, and the promises of the Old Testament have been fulfilled. The structure of the Liturgy of the Word on every Second Sunday of Easter is the same for the Gospel and Psalm, John 20:19-31, and Psalm 118. But the First and Second readings follow the traditional A, B or C cycle for weekend Masses. We are in Year A, so we have The Acts of Apostles, Chapter 2:42-47 and 1st Peter 1:3-9.

Today's Acts reading occurs after Pentecost, 3,000 people have been baptized and received the Holy Spirit. These young disciples devote themselves to the teachings of the apostles. Awe came upon everyone, 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 one's need.

Let's now move forward 2,000 years, to today. I read this week, that Easter Weekend attendance this year was 38% higher than last year across all the Catholic Dioceses of the United States. Thirty-eight percent is a substantial number. A lot more than 3,000 people. One of my Deacon brothers told me St. Mary's in College Station welcomed 425 people into the Church at their Vigil. Where did this "Catholic Revival" come from? No human being, to my knowledge, prophesied this was coming in 2026. I read three different articles this week on what's happening with our Church. Most had the same reasoning behind the growth, except one article added this point: "Young adults are searching for embodied practice, not just opinions. They are tired of spirituality that stays in the head. Catholicism is a whole-body faith, kneeling, fasting, feasting, pilgrimage, sacramental signs, daily prayer, and moral discipline. There is a return to the core practices of Eucharistic adoration, confession, a disciplined spiritual life, and a desire for reverent

liturgy and clear teaching. His closing statement was a warning to all of us, “the spiritual side cannot be reduced to a strategy. Even the most effective vocation plan will fall short if Catholics do not recover a lived sense that the Eucharist is central.” Bingo! That’s my comment! This also gives us great hope that our Catholic friends and family members who have left the Church may come back to their faith.

But do you see Paradox here? We have this great revival happening in the Catholic Church right now, either people coming back to the faith or these supercharged neophytes ready to experience all of this, but we don’t have the infrastructure to “feed” them. Not enough priest, sisters, deacons, church staff, volunteers, and physical places for them to be fed in their Catholic faith. Some people don’t like this growth; they don’t want the challenges of taking care of these new folks. They don’t want to share their space, their Church lifestyle to be disrupted. Like Father Hoa says, “They want to stay in their own spiritual womb, they don’t want to come out and experience all of this.” They lack interest in change, we’re good on how we are. Sacrificing comfort, time, and money for someone else is not necessary for them. Another paradox for us Catholics, maybe a stretch calling it a paradox, we are called to be a light in the darkness, we are called to go spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to the entire world. To be excited that we are Catholic. Recently I have been asking myself, did God feel so sorry for us or just so disappointed with us, that he decided to take matters into his own hands, once again, and bring the entire world to us? Telling all of us, “I’ve set the table, now you take care of them!”

So, the Easter Octave is ending. What Now? What is our plan to continue this fire within our own Holy Family Microcosm? To welcome and take care of all these people and the opportunities God has set before us? “Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.” They are here! Knocking on our door. They are starting to understand that the meaning of life is not consumerism and career, that they need more than that. That their soul is screaming for the Truth. (P) The altar, the Corpus, the Sanctuary is the Truth! When we consume the Eucharist, we are partaking in the body and blood of Jesus Christ. That is the Truth.

Most of us have seen the Truth, experience the Truth, have been blessed by the Truth, and have met God on the mountaintop and in the deepest valley. Jesus Christ is alive. We know it. Now let us live it and the rest will take care of itself.