

Homily: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter – Divine Mercy Sunday – April 27, 2025 - Year C

Today, we celebrate the Second Sunday of Easter, also known as "Divine Mercy Sunday."

In today's Gospel, the risen Jesus appeared to the disciples several times. He patiently eased their troubled hearts. Risen himself, he now brings about "the resurrection of the disciples." He raises their spirits, and their lives are transformed. Earlier, the Lord's words and his example failed to change them. Now, something new happens at Easter, occurring in the light of mercy. Jesus raises them up with mercy. Having received that mercy, they become merciful in turn. On the other hand, it isn't easy to be merciful without first experiencing the gift of mercy.

Though they receive mercy through three gifts: first, Jesus offers them peace; then, the Spirit; and finally, his wounds. The disciples were upset. They were locked away for fear of being arrested and ending up like the Master. But they were not only crowded together in a room; they were also trapped in their remorse. They had abandoned and denied Jesus. They felt helpless, shamed, and worthless. Jesus arrives and says to them twice, "Peace be with you!" Jesus does not bring peace that removes the problems without, but one that infuses trust within.

It is no outward peace, but peace of heart. He tells them, “Peace be with you! Shalom, Shalom!

As the Father has sent me, even so I send you” (Jn 20:21). It is as if to say, “I am sending you because I believe in you. ” Those disheartened disciples were brought to peace with themselves. The peace of Jesus transformed their remorse into mission. The peace of Jesus awakens our mission. It does not involve ease and comfort, but the challenge of breaking free from ourselves. The peace of Jesus liberates us from the self-absorption that paralyzes; it shatters the bonds that keep the heart imprisoned. The disciples came to realize that they had been shown mercy: they understood that God did not condemn or humiliate them, but instead believed in them. God, in fact, believes in us even more than we believe in ourselves.

“He loves us better than we love ourselves (cf. SAINT JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, Meditations and Devotions, III, 12, 2). As far as God is concerned, no one is useless, discredited, or cast away.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, today, Jesus repeats to us again, “Peace be with you! Shalom, Shalom! You are precious in my eyes. Peace be with you! You are

important to me. Peace be with you! You have a mission. No one can take your place. You are irreplaceable. And most of all, I believe in you.

Second, Jesus showed mercy to his disciples by granting them the Holy Spirit. He bestowed the Spirit for the forgiveness of sins (cf. vv. 22-23). The disciples were guilty; they had run away and abandoned the Master. Sin brings torment, and evil has its price. Our sin, as the Psalmist says (cf. 51:5), is always before us. We cannot remove it by ourselves. Only God can take it away; only He, by His mercy, can help us emerge from the depths of our misery. Like those disciples, we need to allow ourselves to be forgiven and to ask for the Lord's heartfelt pardon. "Jesus said to us today, "Your sins, if you are open to forgiveness, will be met with His Divine Mercy.

On Palm Sunday, we see how Jesus forgives Dismas, one of the thieves who was next to Him at the cross. Unlike the other thief, he did not condemn Jesus but instead asked for forgiveness when he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

We need to open our hearts to being forgiven, as Dismas did at the cross. My beloved! Forgiveness in the Holy Spirit is the Easter gift that enables our interior resurrection. Let us ask for the grace to accept that gift and embrace the Sacrament

of forgiveness. We must understand that Confession is not about ourselves and our sins but about God and His mercy. Let us not confess to demean ourselves but to be lifted up. We all need this badly. Like little children who, whenever they fall, need to be picked up by their fathers, we too need this. We frequently stumble, yet the hand of our Father is ready to lift us up and help us keep walking. That sure and trustworthy hand is Confession. Confession is the sacrament that raises us up; it does not leave us on the ground, weeping on the hard stones where we have fallen. Confession is the Sacrament of resurrection; it is pure mercy.

At the beginning of his Apostolic Exhortation “EVANGELII GAUDIUM” “The Joy of the Gospel”, Pope Francis wrote “I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since “no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord”.[\[1\]](#) The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms. Now is the time to say to Jesus: “Lord, I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more, to renew my covenant with you. I need you. Save me once again, Lord, take me once more into your redeeming embrace”. How

good it feels to come back to him whenever we are lost! Let me say this once more: God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy. Christ, who told us to forgive one another “seventy times seven” (*Mt* 18:22) has given us his example: he has forgiven us seventy times seven. Time and time again he bears us on his shoulders. No one can strip us of the dignity bestowed upon us by this boundless and unfailing love. With a tenderness which never disappoints, but is always capable of restoring our joy, he makes it possible for us to lift up our heads and to start anew.”

Fellow sinners! God forgives everything! If we want to receive Jesus' Divine Mercy, we need to be open to admitting our sins and at least show a tear of repentance. Never give up, because what awaits us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation is Jesus' Divine Mercy and our salvation.

With the peace that restores us and the forgiveness that lifts us up, Jesus gave his disciples a third gift of mercy: he showed them his wounds. Through those wounds, we are healed (cf. 1 Pet 2:24; Is 53:5). But how do his wounds heal us? Through mercy. In those wounds, like Thomas, we can truly touch the reality that God has loved us to the end. He has made your and my wounds his own and endured our weaknesses in his body. His wounds are open channels between him and us,

shedding mercy upon our misery. His wounds are pathways that God has opened for us to enter into his tender love and actually “touch” who he is. Let us never again doubt his mercy. By adoring and kissing his wounds, we come to realize that in his tender love all our weaknesses are accepted. This occurs at every Mass, where Jesus offers us his wounded and risen Body. We touch him, and at the same time, he touches our lives. He brings heaven down to us. His radiant wounds dispel the darkness we carry within. Like Thomas, we discover God; we realize how close he is to us, and we are moved to exclaim, “My Lord and my God!” (Jn 20:28). Everything comes from this, from the grace of receiving mercy. This is the starting point of our Christian journey. However, if we trust in our own abilities, in the efficiency of our structures and projects, we will not go far. Only if we accept the love of God can we offer something new to the world.

And that is what the disciples did: in receiving mercy, they in turn became merciful. We see this in the first reading. The Acts of the Apostles relate that “no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common” (4:32). This is true Christianity. It is all the more surprising when we consider that those were the same disciples who had earlier argued about prizes and rewards, and about who was the greatest among them (cf. Mt 10:37; Lk 22:24).

Now they share everything; they are “of one heart and soul” (Acts 4:32). But how did they change like that?

They now recognized in others the same mercy that had transformed their own lives. They discovered that they shared a mission: the forgiveness and the Body of Jesus, making it seem natural to share their earthly possessions. The text continues: “There was not a needy person among them” (v. 34). Their fears had been dispelled by touching the Lord’s wounds, and now they are unafraid to heal the wounds of those in need. There, they see Jesus. Because Jesus is there, in the wounds of those in need.

Dear brothers and sisters, do you want proof that God has touched your life? See if you can lean forward to bind the wounds of others. Today is the day to ask, “Am I, who so often has received God’s peace and mercy, merciful to others? Do I, who have often been fed by the Body of Jesus, make any effort to relieve the hunger of the poor?” We cannot remain indifferent to the reality around us. Let us not live a one-way faith, a faith that receives but does not give, a faith that accepts the gift but does not share it in return.

The Apostle was able to “touch” the Paschal Mystery with his hands, which fully demonstrated God’s redeeming love (cf. Eph 2:4). We, too, are like Thomas: on this

second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday), we are called to contemplate Divine Mercy in the wounds of the Risen One, which overcome all human limitations and shine on the darkness of evil and sin. In His wounds, He heals us and forgives all our sins.

Having received mercy, let us now become merciful. Our faith becomes dry, barren, and sentimental if love concentrates only on ourselves. Without others, faith becomes intangible. Without works of mercy, it dies (cf. James 2:17).

Lastly, beloved brothers and sisters, let us be renewed by the peace, forgiveness, and wounds of the merciful Jesus. Let us seek Jesus' grace to become true witnesses of mercy.

Only in this way will our faith be alive and our lives unified. Only in this way will we proclaim the Gospel of God, which is the Gospel of mercy.