



# WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



Second Sunday of Easter, Divine Mercy Sunday, Cycle C

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*Thomas replied, "My Lord and my God!" John 20:28*

In this week's Gospel, Jesus appears to the disciples who are found hiding behind locked doors. He offers them peace and brings them joy. On Holy Thursday we celebrated the Institution of the Eucharist and Holy Orders. This Divine Mercy Sunday we celebrate Christ's mercy through the institution of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Just as Jesus gives the disciples a mission in this Gospel and bestows the Holy Spirit and authority over sin, these thousands of years later we continue to receive Christ's mercy and likewise are called to mission. The power over sin is given to the Church in these verses, as we acknowledge the validity of the Sacrament of Penance for the exorcism of sin.

As Jesus spoke the words, "Peace be with you" the disciples realize he is mediator between the divine and the human. These words are the fulfillment of his promise, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. ... I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (John 14:27) Jesus brings peace in the midst of fear. For all whose spiritual eyes are open in a moment of conversion (metanoia), the Peace of Christ transcends the vagaries of the world where security one moment is replaced by anxiety the next, where the mortal world never sustains an abiding peaceful presence. His presence restores order from chaos, calms the troubled heart and brings peace. In that moment when the Christian disciple encounters the resurrected merciful Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, the meaning of life changes forever.

The Peace of Christ is the power that drives the right-ordered passion of mission. Divine Mercy cannot be possessed. Once we receive it, we passionately share it and fling it away. In this action, the binding *Kyrie Eleison* (Lord, bind me to you!) from Father to Son to Disciple is established. The passion driving this mission is in the receiving of the Holy Spirit when Christ breathes on each Disciple, and the disciple (us!) inspires deeply this most powerful spiritual "oxygen." Yet, this Communion with the Trinity is conditional on our willingness to forgive one another so that we can be in Unity. As we unbind the sin of others the resulting bond of Unity in Community is glorified. This is the grace of the Resurrection, the unchained freedom to overcome that which separates us from others. The Mercy of Christ heals our mortal woundedness inflicted through the crafty persuasion of the Evil One, accuser and deceiver (see Genesis 3).

The Lord challenges us to believe, just as the Lord challenged Thomas. Thomas responds immediately with the most profound expression of faith in Jesus in all the Gospels, "My Lord and my God!" Believing is not a matter of observation but of the realization of a deep Spiritual Truth. Thomas's experience shows that the presence of Christ within Community is the Pilgrim's Way from darkness to light. The Gospel draws us into the mystery of Spirit through *Lectio Divina* -- the spiritualizing process of ingesting Scripture. The imparting of Diving Life through this transformation from Sacred Scripture is ours for the asking through Church, the Community of the Disciples of the Risen Christ.

**A reading from the holy gospel according to John.**

It was evening on the day Jesus rose from the dead,  
the first day of the week,  
and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked  
for fear of the authorities.

Jesus came and stood among them and said,

*"Peace be with you."*

After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

Jesus said to them again,

*"Peace be with you.*

*As the Father has sent me, so I send you."*

When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,

*"Receive the Holy Spirit.*

*If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them;*

*if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."*

But Thomas, who was called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him,

*"We have seen the Lord."*

But he said to them,

*"Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands,*

*and put my finger in the mark of the nails*

*and my hand in his side,*

*I will not believe."*

A week later his disciples were again in the house,  
and Thomas was with them.

Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said,

*"Peace be with you."*

Then he said to Thomas,

*"Put your finger here and see my hands.*

*Reach out your hand and put it in my side.*

*Do not doubt but believe."*

Thomas answered him,

*"My Lord and my God!"*

Jesus said to him,

*"Have you believed because you have seen me?*

*Blessed are those who have not seen*

*and yet have come to believe. "*

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples,  
which are not written in this book.

But these are written so that you may come to believe  
that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God,  
and that through believing you may have life in his name.