

Beloved in Christ, the second Sunday of Easter is traditionally called **Divine Mercy Sunday**. It is the Sunday in when we remind ourselves of God's tender mercies – when we strive, more than ever, to let Him break through the locked doors of our hearts. It is a time for fulfilling the promise of the Resurrection, the glorious hope of Easter. Christ has left the tomb. If we choose, we can step out of the tomb of **selfishness and sin**. We can feel the healing light of God's care. We can take that second chance. It's an opportunity for us to celebrate the eternal inheritance Jesus has won for us, an inheritance that is "**imperishable, undefiled, and unfading**" (1Pt.1:4). Jesus Christ shares his resurrection power with us as we can see them through the ministry of the apostles.

In the first reading, we are told that the Apostles were totally transformed and endowed with many miraculous signs and wonders. Now, the people have great confidence in them so much so that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and mats so that when Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on one... and they were all cured (Acts 5:12-16). Many signs accompanied the early Christians that helped build the people's faith on apostolic teachings. By defeating evils and healing the sick, the apostles were destroying the demonic kingdom and establishing God's Kingdom on earth. The apostles' intimacy with the Lord, in prayer and fellowship, helped them to spread the Good News. Let us imitate them and have a close relationship with Christ and one another. Although we are not eyewitnesses to Christ in the flesh, we are empowered through our baptism to share Christ with others.

Through the mercy of God, the Apostles were able to establish the first Christian community, as we heard from the first reading. The fact is that the early Christian community was built on **Ascetical, Eschatological, Eucharistic, Christocentric, Prayer and Fraternal Charity**. "They devoted themselves...to the breaking of bread, prayer, and had all things in common..." (Acts 2:42-43). St. John Chrysostom observed that, the early Christians also drew their strength from two virtues- **perseverance and fellowship**. These virtues should be an important element in the life of Christians of all ages. It is in this fraternal charity and fellowship that evangelist John admonished Christians in the midst of uncertainty to have **faith**, because, the victory that conquers the world is our **faith** (1Jn.5:4). I think the issue was a proper understanding of the person of Jesus and his role in salvation, as well as a commitment to communal living according to the demands of Christian fellowship. The evangelist insists that right faith recognizes Jesus as the incarnate Son of God, and that right behavior is reflected in **mutual love among community members** (1Jn.5:2). When we are 'begotten by God,' we hold fast to this faith and 'testify' to the truth by which 'we love as the children of God'.

Again, the **Divine Mercy** was at its best in our Gospel reading today. It is through love and mercy that Jesus forgave Thomas and cleared his doubt. Maybe the others started calling him "the Doubter" during that week and kept trying to convince him by their words but, no, Thomas had to know for himself. Then, a week later, they were all together again in the same place, hoping Jesus might return. Somehow Jesus was suddenly among them, and when I imagine this scene, I think that for a brief moment Thomas was the only one who could see Jesus. Their eyes met and stayed on each other as Jesus gave his usual greeting, "Peace be with you". I imagine that Jesus looked at Thomas with such love, forgiveness and acceptance that Thomas crumbled releasing all the love and faith that he'd been holding back. Jesus even invited Thomas to touch his hands and his side (Jn.20:27), but Thomas no longer needed that sort of proof. He had seen all he needed to see and he believed. Thomas then made a profound faith proclamation, 'My Lord and my God! And he invites us to do the same.

Finally, dear friends, Thomas represents all of us, who are relying on **reason to believe, instead of faith**. Typically, we assume that John includes this account of Thomas' doubt in order to expose and to warn us against the sort of doubt Thomas manifested. Let us profess our faith like repented Thomas, "**my Lord and my God**" (Jn.20:28)! This professing of faith is rooted in our liturgy and before we receive Holy Communion, we affirm our faith in the risen Lord. Let us always rely on his love and mercy and deepen our faith in Jesus. Let us do our best to imitate the early Christians virtues: of love, **prayer, eschatological and Christocentric**, so that we may inherit the "imperishable, undefiled and unfading" glory promised to us and be with him forever and ever. Amen!