

My dear people of God, second Sunday of Easter is traditionally called **Divine Mercy Sunday**. It is the Sunday in which 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).

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 (Acts 4:32-35) contained summaries of the early Christian community as **Ascetical, Eschatological, Eucharistic, Christocentric, Prayer and Fraternal Charity**. "They devoted themselves...to the breaking of bread, prayer, and had all things in common..." (Acts.2:44). 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** (1John 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** (1John 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, or this evening, 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, but Thomas no longer needed that sort of proof. He had seen all he needed to see and he believed.

Finally, dear friends, Thomas represents all of us, who 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!