

Your Lourdes Sunday Liturgy at Home

Second Sunday of Easter (Sunday of Divine Mercy)

April 19, 2020

“Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

– John 20:29

Here we are again sheltering in place, just like the disciples in this Sunday’s Gospel. We stay put except for forays out to get food or medicine. We may even have to be masked and observe “social distancing” from our families if we are working in health care or other fields labeled essential. We’re not unlike those disciples who the disciples isolated themselves in that Upper Room after Good Friday, fearful, dejected, worrying, abandoned, perplexed, and just plain sad. They too probably left that place of refuge only to get supplies. Maybe that’s why Thomas was absent when “Jesus came and stood in their midst.”

Poor Thomas. He gets the nickname “Doubting Thomas” because of his demand to see the wounds of Jesus before he’d believe that his Savior had somehow got into the locked Upper Room. His response to Jesus – “My Lord and my God!” – is the strongest, clearest profession of faith made in all the Gospels. Thomas recovered splendidly, thank you very much. And he probably did not actually touch those wounds that he said he wanted to examine.

Jesus has a message for us: “Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.” And the Gospel author John gives us another window into the story where we can step in and be a part. Earlier in the Gospel, he began speaking of the unnamed “Disciple Whom Jesus Loved,” which gives us an opening to be that very person. Here, Thomas is called “Didymus” which means “twin” in Greek. We could be that unnamed Twin, and that Twin could be either a maternal twin or a fraternal twin, a woman or a man. So you are invited to put yourself into the narrative.

Our selection from the First Letter of St. Peter has special meaning for the Dominican Friars of the Province of St. Martin de Porres – the Southern Province to which Frs. Jeffery and Bruce belong. The document that launched this branch of the 800-year-old

Order of Preachers (the Dominicans) is named after this line from the letter: “a new birth to a living hope.” It set out a set of ideals that served as a compass guiding the friars since the province was formed in 1979. This lyrical passage was probably a sermon at the time of adult baptism in an early Christian community. It sings of redemptive suffering that leads to hope.

The reading from the Acts of the Apostles gives a picture of the earliest Christian community – even before they were called “Christians” (that name came to be used when the first community of Gentiles was created a while later in Antioch, as noted in Acts 11:19-26). Our section of Acts this weekend (2:42-47) is one of three summary passages (along with 4:32-37 and 5:12-16) that outline, somewhat ideally, the chief characteristics of the early Jerusalem community who followed “the way” of Jesus. These markers included:

- Keeping to the teachings of the Twelve Disciples;
- Centering the community on the Eucharistic liturgy;
- Creating a system of distributing of goods that led to wealthier members to sell their possessions when the needs of the community’s poor required it;
- Continuing to attend services at the Jewish temple, since at this very early stage of development there was little thought of any dividing line between Judaism and the way of Jesus.
- Celebrating their shared meals in home churches with “exultation and sincerity of heart.”

The exuberance, the joy and the idealism spill off the page. How can we try to recapture that ardor and zeal in our worship, in our ministry and in our feasting together?

One commitment you could make over the next five week is to each day read a portion of a chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, which is seen as St. Luke’s account of the beginnings of the church and sometimes is called the Gospel of the Holy Spirit. Or since all the first weekday readings are from Acts, you could get the highlights by going to the US Conference of Catholic Bishops website:

<http://cms.usccb.org/bible/readings>.

Your Lourdes Sunday Liturgy at Home: Divine Mercy
April 19, 2020

**In the name of the Father, † and of the Son, and
of the Holy Spirit.**
Amen

Lord Jesus, you shared your peace with the disciples who were
gathered in fear:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you bestowed the Holy Spirit upon them:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you did this so that others may have life in your name:

Lord, have mercy.

Opening Prayer:

God of everlasting mercy,
each year when the feast of Easter returns
you enliven the faith of your holy people.
Increase in us the grace you have already bestowed,
that we may understand more fully
in whose font we have been washed,
in whose Spirit we have been reborn,
and in whose blood we have found redemption.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God forever and ever.
Let the church say – Amen.

Readings:

Reading 1

Acts of the Apostles [2:42 – 47]

They devoted themselves
to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life,
to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.
Awe came upon everyone,
and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.
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 each one's need.
Every day they devoted themselves
to meeting together in the temple area
and to breaking bread in their homes.
They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart,
praising God and enjoying favor with all the people.
And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being
saved.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 118

R. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, his love is everlasting.

Let the house of Israel say,
“His mercy endures forever.”
Let the house of Aaron say,
“His mercy endures forever.”
Let those who fear the LORD say,
“His mercy endures forever.”

R. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, his love is everlasting.

I was hard pressed and was falling,
but the LORD helped me.
My strength and my courage is the LORD,

and he has been my savior.
The joyful shout of victory
in the tents of the just:

R. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, his love is everlasting.

The stone which the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
By the LORD has this been done;
it is wonderful in our eyes.
This is the day the LORD has made;
let us be glad and rejoice in it.

R. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, his love is everlasting.

Reading 2

First Letter of St. Peter [1st Peter 1:3 – 9]

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading,
kept in heaven for you
who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith,
to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time.
In this you rejoice, although now for a little while
you may have to suffer through various trials,
so that the genuineness of your faith,
more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire,
may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor
at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
Although you have not seen him you love him;
even though you do not see him now yet believe in him,
you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy,
as you attain the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel
John 20:19 – 31

On the evening of that first day of the week,
when the doors were locked, where the disciples were,
for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst
and said to them, “Peace be with you.”
When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.
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.”
And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,
“Receive the Holy Spirit.
Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them,
and whose sins you retain are retained.”

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve,
was not with them when Jesus came.
So the other disciples said to 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 into the nail marks
and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”
Now a week later his disciples were again inside
and Thomas was with them.
Jesus came, although the doors were locked,
and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.”
Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands,
and bring your hand and put it into my side,
and do not be unbelieving, but believe.”
Thomas answered and said to him, “My Lord and my God!”
Jesus said to him, “Have you come to believe because you have seen
me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.” Now,
Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are
not written in this book.
But these are written that you may come to believe
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,
and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

The Gospel of the Lord

Reflection Prompts:

This section of John collapses the time between the Resurrection and Pentecost (traditionally 50 days later) and has Jesus breathing on the assembled disciples and giving them Holy Spirit on the first day after Easter Sunday. Why not then begin this reflection time with silent prayer. Just sit. Focus on your breath. Welcome the divine breath of life that dissolves fear to breathe on you.

1. In three places in this Gospel passage, Jesus says, “Peace be with you.” Imagine Jesus saying that to you. What kind of peace would you want? What kind of peace do you need?
2. Despite locked doors, Jesus came and stood in the midst of the fearful disciples. At this time of our being cooped up and wary, how are we letting Jesus enter our houses and lives? Do you feel Jesus walk beside you everyday?
3. Thomas initially wanted to see and touch Jesus to believe that he was alive. What do you need to see and touch to come to greater belief?
4. The Letter to the Hebrews 1:1 says “Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things unseen.” Visualize what you hope for and see it with the eyes of faith. Discuss.
5. The early Church as described in our Acts reading distributed goods “according to each one’s need.” “Goods” included the God-given gifts and talents in addition to material possessions.

Pope John Paul II called the sharing of goods in common, “contributive justice.” He wrote: “there are many human needs which find no place on the market. It is a strict duty of justice and truth not to allow fundamental human needs to remain unsatisfied, and not to allow those burdened by such needs to perish.” (From his encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, #34 which was written on the 100th anniversary of Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical on labor and capitalism).

With all this in mind, how does the Lourdes community measure up to the sharing standards set by these ideals stated in Acts and Pope John Paul II's encyclical? How could we expand our sharing? (This might also be a question for some of the Lourdes ministry groups – the Men's and Women's groups, the Knights and Ladies, Health Promotion and Social Action, Haiti and Habitat for Humanity, Lourdes Lunch, Simon's Call, and St. Vincent de Paul, to name a few.)

6. Each day this early Christian community in Jerusalem prayed both in the temple and in the "breaking of bread" in their homes. And in both worship experiences, they did it with gusto. They were especially exuberant in the house "churches" where they ate "with exultation and sincerity of heart." How does this compare with weekend liturgies at Lourdes?
7. What is the most attractive feature of this first Christian community? The fellowship? The sharing? The recruiting of new members? The ministries of healing?

Let the discussion wind down and come to a close, and then after a period of centering, move into the intercessions followed by singing or reciting the Lord's Prayer.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS – April 19, 2020
SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER – DIVINE MERCY

Leader: Dear friends, let us pray to God to give us the courage to say "Here I am, Lord, send me" to be a follower of Christ.

Reader:

1. For the church, that all Christians may be authentic signs of Christ's presence to others. We pray: **Live in us, O God.**
(RESPOND: **Live in us, O God.**)
2. For all who must work during these days of quarantine, that they will be safe from harm and know our gratitude. We pray: **Live in us, O God.**

3. For the world, that Christ's peace may be experienced everywhere, especially among refugees and victims of war. We pray: **Live in us, O God.**
4. For the grace to offer forgiveness and show mercy towards those who have harmed us. We pray: **Live in us, O God.**
5. For all those who experience any kind of hatred and prejudice to be touched by Christ's peace. We pray: **Live in us, O God.**
6. For all our loved ones in the military and their families, that they be returned to us safely and experience a welcoming community. We pray: **Live in us, O God.**
7. Please share any intention you have [PAUSE.....] as well as all our own needs. We pray: **Live in us, O God.**
8. For our newly appointed Archbishop Gregory Hartmayer as he prepares to be installed next month, that he may be granted peace and wisdom in this new assignment. We pray: **Live in us, O God.**
9. For the more than 22 million people now unemployed in our country, that they be offered the assistance they need to maintain their lives and be rehired when this pandemic lifts. We pray: **Live in us, O God.**
10. For all those who are separated from us by infirmity, especially those afflicted by the corona-virus, and for all those living with HIV and AIDS, that they know our community's care for them. We pray: **Live in us, O God.**
11. For all the dead, those who have fallen victim to this corona-virus and all those who died since last Easter — that God may bring them to a haven of rest and peace, especially Mrs. Ernestine Miller, for whom this Mass is being celebrated. We pray: **Live in us, O God.**

- 12.** Please share any intention you have [PAUSE.....] as well as all our own needs. We pray: **Live in us, O God.**

Leader: God of peace and mercy: Give us eyes to see the loving presence of your son, hearts to receive him, and courage to share signs of his presence with others. We ask this in his holy name. **LET THE CHURCH SAY.....AMEN!**

Closing Prayer

Eternal God,^[SEP] watch over your Church with unfailing care,^[SEP] that we who have received new life^[SEP] through Christ^[SEP] may come to the glory of the resurrection.^[SEP] Grant this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let the Church say.....AMEN!

Closing Hymn: Jesus Christ is Risen Today

Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia,
our triumphant holy day, Alleluia,
who did once upon the cross, Alleluia,
suffer to redeem our loss; Alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia,
unto Christ our heavenly king, Alleluia,
who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia,
sinners to redeem and save, Alleluia!

But the pains that he endured, Alleluia,
Our salvation have procured, Alleluia,
now above the sky he's King, Alleluia,
where the angels ever sing, Alleluia!

14th century Latin Hymn