

SECOND SUNDAY OF Easter

(OR OF DIVINE MERCY)

APRIL 11, 2021



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**Jesus came and stood in their
midst and said to them,
“Peace be with you.”**

John 20:19

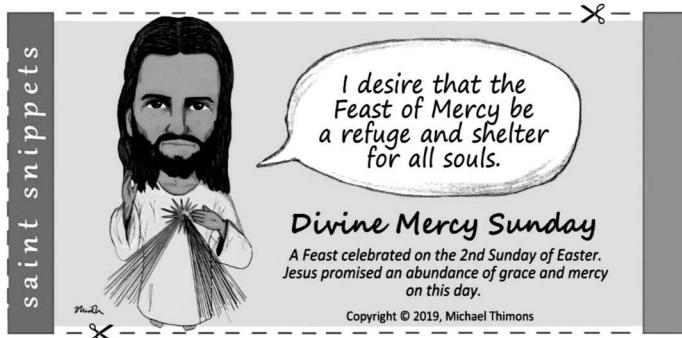
Feast of Faith

The Psalms in the Liturgy

The book of Psalms is a prayer book, hymnal, and anthology of verse all rolled into one. It contains one hundred fifty ancient songs—poem-prayers that express the joys and sorrows of the Hebrew people and their longing for God. The psalms are incredibly varied in tone. Some are solemn anthems of praise that once accompanied processions of great multitudes to the temple; others record the lonely cries of a faithful soul who feels abandoned by God.

This ancient prayer book of the Hebrew people is our principal prayer book as well. The psalms are everywhere in the liturgy—in the antiphons and acclamations of the Mass, and most particularly in the responsorial psalm that follows the first reading. The psalm that is sung at Mass usually echoes the themes of the first reading, and sometimes even comments on it. On this Third Sunday of Lent, we listen to the Exodus account of the stubbornness of God's people in the desert, and then the psalm comes to remind us: "If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Psalm 95:8). In their wonderful variety, the psalms teach us how to pray.

—Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.



Doubt

The desire to be able to prove the existence of a divinity has troubled humanity since human consciousness first became aware of the divine. To this very day we are fond of saying that any number of things—from sunsets to hot fudge sundaes—are “proof that there is a God.” We get so caught up in the story of “doubting Thomas” that we fail to notice that today’s Gospel gives us John’s account of Pentecost, the bestowing of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples following the Resurrection. Thomas, evidently, missed out not only on seeing the Risen Christ, but receiving the Holy Spirit as well. This is not to be taken lightly and, perhaps, makes Thomas’ disbelief a bit easier to comprehend. It also makes his professing that Jesus is his Lord and God—the only time the New Testament explicitly refers to Jesus Christ as “God”—more remarkable.

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Readings for the Week

Monday:	Acts 4:23-31; Ps 2:1-3, 4-9; Jn 3:1-8
Tuesday:	Acts 4:32-37; Ps 93:1-2, 5; Jn 3:7b-15
Wednesday:	Acts 5:17-26; Ps 34:2-9; Jn 3:16-21
Thursday:	Acts 5:27-33; Ps 34:2, 9, 17-20; Jn 3:31-36
Friday:	Acts 5:34-42; Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14; Jn 6:1-15
Saturday:	Acts 6:1-7; Ps 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19; Jn 6:16-21
Sunday:	Acts 3:13-15, 17-19; Ps 4:2, 4, 7-9; 1 Jn 2:1-5a; Lk 24:35-48

Christ Is Here

Christ departed from our sight that we might return to our heart, and there find him. For he departed, and behold, he is here.

—St. Augustine

A Cheerful Giver

A cheerful giver does not count the cost of what he gives. His heart is set on pleasing and cheering the one to whom the gift is given.

—St. Julian
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Saints and Special Observances

Sunday:	Second Sunday of Easter (or Sunday of Divine Mercy); Julian Calendar Easter
Monday:	Ramadan (Islamic observance) begins at sunset
Tuesday:	St. Martin I
Thursday:	Income Tax Day

Today's Readings

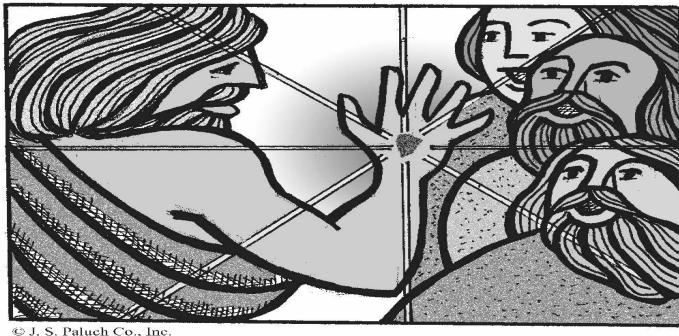
First Reading — With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus (Acts 4:32-35).

Psalm — Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting (Psalm 118).

Second Reading — The victory that conquers the world is our faith (1 John 5:1-6).

Gospel — Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed (John 20:19-31).

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Second Sunday of Easter (or Sunday of Divine Mercy)

April 11, 2021

**Who indeed is the victor over the world
but the one who believes
that Jesus is the Son of God?**

—1 John 5:5

Treasures From Our Tradition

Today was once called in Latin “Dominica in albis,” or “Sunday in White,” because the church was full of newly baptized Christians wearing their white baptismal garments. Another old title, best forgotten, is “Low Sunday.” There’s nothing low about this festive Sunday in Easter, the eighth day since the first “Alleluia” rang out. In Christian tradition, the number eight is a symbol of fulfillment, transition, breaking through the seven-day rhythm of life to a new way of being. That is why many baptismal fonts have eight sides. The greatest feasts of our calendar are always extended for eight days, called an “octave.” In a way, this means that this first week of Easter is really considered to be one great day. This octave day of Easter sees the best features of Easter still vibrant: joyful alleluias, lush spring flowers everywhere, sprinkling with water, and a lavish table where the Lord gives us himself as bread and wine. For Orthodox Christians, today is the Easter feast, since their tradition requires that the Christian Passover cannot begin until the days of the Jewish Passover are ended.

—James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Extreme Christians

This Sunday's first reading is one of the descriptions of ideal apostolic life. Remember John's Gospel saying that God is love? Here we have Luke's version in Acts of that same principle. He begins with the community being one in heart and mind. They not only believed in the same Risen Lord, but their love for Him showed in their love for each other. They were not just a community or parish; they were one family.

Luke shows two ways the Christian communities began to change the world. First, they told anyone who would listen about the resurrection "with great power." (Acts 4:33) You can take that as power to do miracles, healings, etc. But it can also mean the power of conviction: They were so excited about Jesus' resurrection, that they couldn't stop talking about it. Their fervor was infectious. We could use some of that fervor today. I sometimes think the only reason we don't do miracles ourselves is that we don't really believe we could. Maybe we need to remind ourselves that we aren't the ones doing the miracles--God is. Remember how many times Jesus told people it was their faith that cured them? God can do miracles any time he wants. But we can't receive them if we don't have faith. Instead of trying to believe that you can do a miracle, try believing that God can do it for you.

The second way the disciples stood out was their willingness to give up anything for the Lord. Luke uses the example of selling their property to share with those in need. But some went even further, giving up their lives for the faith. That kind of witness says that the resurrection is real and I expect to take part in it. It also says that nothing can make me give up my faith. So what am I willing to give up for the Lord? It's easy to throw money in a collection for the poor. How about giving some time to feed the poor, or help build a home for someone? What can you give to help spread the faith--maybe the time to be a sponsor for a convert? The love you show to others could be their only experience of God's love.

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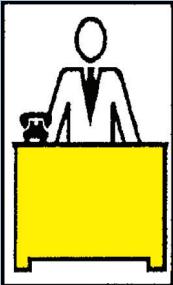
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