

Christ Child Catholic Church
***Dedicated to Growth in Christ and to the
Challenges of Loving Service***

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SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER
DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY
April 19, 2020

1st reading, Acts 2:42-47

The Functions of the Church

The early church turned its world upside-down for Christ. They taught the doctrine of Christ, their fellowship centered on Christ, they remember Him in communion, they communicated with Him in prayer, and they exalted Christ in worship. As the twenty-first century church focuses on Christ in the way, the Spirit will turn its world upside-down as well.

The church was in its infancy when the NT Scriptures were being written; therefore, only the fundamental functions of the church would be recorded there. The fact that these functions were basic however - like eating, breathing, and sleeping are to an infant - make them no less important. They are necessary so that the church, the body of Christ, might grow to maturity.

Following Pentecost and the baptizing of believers that occurred at that time, the church quickly grew to more than 3,000 in number. These early believers gathered in at least two different venues to listen to the apostles' teaching – in the courts of the

temple in Jerusalem and in homes. In both settings, the believers – under the apostles' direction and leadership – engaged in activities that strengthened them for accomplishing the Great Commission given by Christ.

Doctrine! In the time of Acts, there was no written NT. The earliest letter from the apostles (probably Galatians) did not appear until two decades after the birth of the church at Pentecost. Therefore, the church in Jerusalem took in the apostles' teaching on Jesus of Nazareth as the hope and “consolation of Israel” – the promised Jewish Messiah...

Fellowship! Today, the word fellowship is often reduced to social activities in the context of congregational life (now we do not have due to pandemic). While true fellowship can be manifested through social activity, the word means much more. The Greek word *koinonia* signifies oneness or commonality – true community. Jesus prayed that His followers would be one with Him and the Father, just as He and the Father are one. This unity was illustrated in the way the early Christians shared their possessions.

The Lord's Supper! They celebrated the **Eucharist** in their homes, praising God and breaking bread together as Jesus had done with his disciples. The Jerusalem church celebrated this meal regularly in anticipation of the day they would celebrate it with Jesus in His kingdom.

Prayer was a constant practice in the early church! The apostles prayed for those they ministered to as well. But prayer was not only in response to crisis and needs. Because of the references to worship, we can assume that prayers of praise were a significant part of the community life of the early church.

Generosity and Service, Joy overflowing as Evangelism...!

2nd reading First of Peter 1:3-9

A Heavenly Inheritance

Father, Son, Spirit. Peter praised the Father because in his mercy he gave new life (“birth”) to Christians. This new life comes from the resurrection of Jesus.

Faith, hope, and love! Hope is mentioned first. Peter looks toward the imperishable inheritance God intends for Christians. Faith provides them with the strength they need in life's struggles. Love for Jesus is their response to the good that Jesus has brought into their lives.

Gospel John 20: 19-31

The Apostles Commissioned

The first words Jesus said to the assembled disciples were **Peace be with you**. They must have been terrified, first for fear of the Jews (we have fear for coronavirus) they thought they were seeing a ghost. But when Jesus showed them His wounds, they knew this was their **Lord**. Jesus had promised the Holy Spirit. Just as God created humanity with His breath. He gave the Holy Spirit to His disciples by breathing on them. God was re-creating humanity in Christ.

Rather than belittling Thomas for his doubts, Jesus welcomed his **reach** and touch, which moved Thomas from **unbelieving** to **believing**. **“My Lord and my God!”**

Jesus added, **Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**

“As the Father has sent me, so I send you,” Jesus passes on the mission which the Father had given Him to his disciples (not just to the apostles). They are to become Christ's bodily presence to reveal God's love to God's people.

We pray the ROSARY together in your home!!!

**Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and Luminous
Mysteries!**

MASS INTENTIONS April 18 - 24

Saturday + Calvin Andrew Stafford Jr.
Sunday + Gerard Edward Glenn
Tuesday Doctors and people of hospitals
Thursday All the Sick
Friday For all the persons died in the pandemic

**Prayer requests: can be emailed to
christchildchurchprayerline@gmail .com**

**Pope calls for a ‘contagion’ of Easter hope, peace,
care for poor**

Vatican City – In an Easter celebration like no other, Pope Francis prayed that Christ, “who has already defeated death and opened for us the way to eternal salvation,” would “dispel the darkness of our suffering humanity and lead us into the light of his glorious day, a day that knows no end.”

The pope's traditional Easter message before his blessing “urbi et orbi” (to the city and the world) still mentioned countries yearning for peace, migrants and refugees in need of a welcoming home and the poor deserving of assistance.

But his Easter prayers April 12 were mostly in the context of the suffering and death caused by the coronavirus and the economic difficulties the pandemic already has triggered.

A different “contagion,” a message transmitted from heart to heart – for every human heart awaits this Good News. It is the contagion of hope: “Christ, my hope, is raised!” This is no magic formula that makes problems vanish. No, the resurrection of Christ is not that. Instead, it is the victory of love over the root of evil, a victory that does not “by-pass” suffering and death, but passes through them, opening a path in the abyss, transforming evil into good: this is the unique hallmark of the power of God.

The Risen Lord is also the Crucified One, not someone else. In his glorious body he bears indelible wounds: wounds that have become windows of hope...