

Have you ever met somebody who was so wise, so good at his art, so great in his personality that instead of being intimidated or overwhelmed by him, you felt as great as him? Have you ever met somebody who knew you so well and trusted you so much that you could be completely free in his presence: without any fear, any shame, without hiding anything, without any pretensions? His trust would be so great that the only way you think possible to respond to him is to trust.

“Didn’t our hearts burn in us when he was speaking to us,” the disciples asked themselves on the road to Emmaus. “Beloved teacher,” whispered Mary Magdalene when she recognized Jesus at the tomb. Both scenes very clearly suggest something more than a joyful surprise. Of course, there was a joy and there was a surprise in those meetings, but the way the people respond when they recognize Jesus suggests something more than just happiness upon hearing good news. They want to stay with him. They feel close to him like never before. We see it in the abruptness of his disappearance in the case of the disciples on the road. And in the case of Mary, in the words of the Master himself, “Do not stop me Mary.” *“Noli me tangere.”*

Who did they meet? Today’s reading describing the encounter of Jesus with the disciples in the Upper Room helps us to understand it a little better. And our guide is Thomas. I don’t think Thomas is the one who doubts. After all, every one of the disciples has a hard time believing what they are seeing. I think Thomas could be the most honest among them, or maybe even the one who has been longing for Christ the most. That’s why he doesn’t want to be led astray by fake news. His biggest problem is the same problem that all the apostles have with the risen Lord - the same one we have. Thomas cannot find in his experience or his knowledge or his imagination any points of reference. He cannot find any tools – spiritual, psychological or even physical - that would suggest to him how to receive the unexpected presence. The only way available to him is the way of complete trust. It starts from seeing the Lord, and leads through touching of Jesus’ wounds, all the way to the complete acceptance of the revelation of the intimate presence: “My Lord and my God!”

These surprising encounters convey more than only the message that Christ is risen. What the apostles and Mary are receiving is not just a bit of information, it is an invitation to closeness. Very surprisingly, Jesus who died and now is risen seems to be much closer to his friends than ever before. He is inviting them to enter the intimacy with God at the level that they never thought possible. It is very difficult to analyze the nature of that encounter. We can only grasp little snippets, little sounds, and notes in the reaction to his presence. None of them feels threatened or judged. None of them feels guilty for their behavior during the Passion. None of them feels left behind. How could it be? They are the same people that they were before and they have the same imperfections. They carry the same wounds and mistakes. What they encounter is the new way of God’s presence with his people. Presence that we call Mercy. It is so pure and so powerful that it gives them life. It liberates them from everything that was small. It allows them finally to embrace the simplest and the greatest mystery of their lives: God loves them with all his power and all his intensity. And he will not abandon them, ever. The power of the Holy Spirit is breathing through creation. Things that were broken, tainted, abandoned are now found and alive. That is why Thomas helps us with his reaction: “My Lord and my God!” It could be nobody else: no power and no dominion can act like this; nobody can liberate him from sin. That is why he recognizes God.

This Sunday of Divine Mercy invites us to make a terrifying step. Christ asks us not to understand our sins, not to meditate on them, not to repress them from our memory, not to build a reasonable method of fixing our mistakes, but to start with the act of trust, a complete surrender to him. We are to entrust to him everything that is holding us hostage in our personal darkness. He wants us to stop our

misguided attempts of fitting God's love into the dimensions of our small world. Instead, we are to make an act of trust and faith, and allow his love to transform and heal us. We have to do this if we do not want to be afraid or in despair when we look at ourselves. If we do this, when we look at Him, we will see the face of the loving Father.

The Church, through the ministry of Saint John Paul II, gives us this Sunday as the Sunday of Divine Mercy, and with it, a very simple prayer called the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. The prayer comes from the tradition of ancient prayers of repetition in Christianity, just like the Jesus prayer of the East and the Rosary and litanies of the West. The purpose of these prayers is not to multiply words, but to create a rhythm of thoughts that would allow our heart to rest in God. They are made of simple words that would keep our minds and hearts oriented to the forgiving presence of Divine Mercy.

### ***Chaplet of the Divine Mercy***

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

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death, Amen.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell; on the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

### ***Prayed on large beads***

Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your Dearly Beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

### ***Prayed on 10 small beads of each decade***

For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

### ***Prayed after all 5 decades of Chaplet are complete***

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world. *(Repeat three times)*