

Easter: April 4, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We continue to greet one another today with "Happy Easter!" and "He is truly risen!" as we complete the 8th day of this Easter Octave. Each day of the Octave (first eight days of Easter) we celebrate as if it were Easter Sunday itself. The Resurrection of the Lord is so important that one day is not enough for Easter. Additionally, God created the world in seven days and then re-created humanity in His restored image when Christ rose from the dead on the "eighth day". We consider Easter, the "eighth day", to also be the first day of the "New Creation". The octave day of Easter, or the Second Sunday of Easter, is the day we read the passage where Jesus appears to St. Thomas. And, so, this day is also called "Doubting Thomas Sunday."

Finally, because Jesus asked St. Faustina Kowalska to ask the Church to begin a day honoring the Divine Mercy of God for all of us, St. John Paul II in the Year 2000 also named this day "Divine Mercy Sunday". Please see the article on the reverse side with an explanation of the meaning of today's celebration. We encourage everyone to come pray in church for God's mercy to come to all human hearts and to ask for mercy for ourselves. We will pray the prayers of Divine Mercy in the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist between the Masses on Sunday. It is no mere coincidence that the Church has always read the gospel passage, on this Sunday every year, when Jesus gave His Apostles the power to forgive sins on the first Easter Sunday night!

The Church offers a very special "plenary" or "full" indulgence on Divine Mercy Sunday if we fulfill the requirements (see next page). An indulgence, simply put, is a special gift of God's grace, given through His Church, which remits all of the punishment due for the damage my personal sins have caused or the damage a deceased person's sins have caused during their lifetime. One may offer an indulgence for oneself or for a deceased person.

Please keep in mind that St. Mary's Visitation is honoring Jesus with 40-Hours of Eucharistic Adoration and Devotion beginning at noon on Sunday and finishing with a closing Mass and Holy Hour on Tuesday, April 13 at 7:00 pm. All are welcome to spend time in quiet prayer for 30 minutes or an hour. Please sign the board in the vestibule at St. Mary's or call Lanette Einig at 616.896.7955 to sign-up. During this Year of St. Joseph the talks and homilies during our 40 hours will honor St. Joseph.

Also, the Feast of St. Stanislaus is Monday, April 12. Please join St. Stanislaus Parish for a special Mass at 5:30 pm in honor of their patron saint.

May the Merciful Savior shower you with His abundant Grace! Jesus, I trust in You!

Easter Blessings,
Fr. Derda, Fr. Steve, Deacon Russ & Deacon Ed