

Homily for the Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday)

19 April 2020

Sacred Heart – St. Louis Parish

“Like newborn infants, you must long for the pure, spiritual milk, that in him you may grow to salvation, alleluia.

Reading 1 – Acts 2:42-47

Psalm 118 – **Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his love is everlasting.**

Reading 2 – 1 Peter 1:3-9

Gospel – John 20:19-31

Homily for Divine Mercy Sunday

This Sunday we come to the eighth day after Easter and the final day in the Octave of Easter. For the past eight days in the church we have been celebrating as it was Easter Sunday itself. At each Mass we prayed to God’s great glory and continued to hear in the gospel readings the first accounts, those first encounters that the disciples and the apostles had with Jesus. Think back to the gospel reading from Easter morning. It is Mary of Magdala that came to the tomb and found it empty. On Easter Monday we hear of another encounter of two disciples going to the tomb and finding it empty, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. Later in the week we hear that Mary Magdalene that was at the empty tomb in which Jesus came and revealed himself to her. She did not recognize him at first. She went back to the others and reported her experience. But they did not believe her. Then there were two more of Jesus’ disciples on the road to Emmaus and they encountered Jesus, again not recognizing him at first. They go back to the others and they report to them their encounter with the Lord and again these two are not believed. Finally, Jesus appears to the eleven and finally they believe. Jesus rebukes them for not believing sooner.

This Sunday Jesus again is revealing himself to the disciples. We keep hearing about these encounters that the disciples had with Jesus in those early days after His death on the cross for the same reason he had to keep coming and appearing to them. They would not believe. Sometimes we don't believe so easily either.

He reveals himself to the apostles while they are locked away in the upper room. Yet, one of the apostles is not there. Thomas. Jesus comes to them and gives them his peace and blessing. He gives them the power to absolve sins. This is where we see the gift of the Sacrament of Confession come into the Church, this gift of Jesus' Divine Mercy. When they report this experience with Thomas, Thomas fails to believe. He wants to see the Lord himself. He wants to inspect the wounds. Well, he would certainly get his chance.

We next hear that the disciples are locked away again. This time Thomas is with them. He is there and Jesus comes over to Thomas and say here, make your inspection. Touch the nail marks on my hands, put you hand into my side. We don't actually hear whether or not Thomas actually touched the wounds or not and I am not sure if that would even matter, but Thomas certainly came to believe.

Do we believe that the Lord is indeed Risen? Do you believe? I admit, I sometimes wonder if I believe or not. I think those thoughts come to all of us from time to time. We see all of these things that are going on in our world, not only the current crisis taking place around us with the COVID-19 Pandemic, but

with all the other diseases and illnesses that people die from on a daily basis in our world; so many bad things that happen to other people. The list could certainly be very long. And yet, I find myself looking at all the experiences that I have had in my life and study that I have done in the seminary and I have to say, yes, I do believe. I have to believe. I think we all sometimes just have to believe.

In our second reading this Sunday, there is a line that stands out that I want us to take a moment or two to reflect upon. The second reading is from the first Letter of Saint Peter in which he shares with us that our Lord Jesus Christ has given us a new birth to a living hope that one day we will receive an incredible inheritance that has been purchased for us by the death and resurrection of Jesus. In this promise we rejoice, although for a little while, we may have to suffer through various trials. One thing that I think that we need to be reminded of is that we have never been promised that we will receive our inheritance this side of heaven. We will have to go through trials, but if we put our faith in God, solidly and completely in him, then we will endure through our sufferings now, because our real freedom will come when we are called to our own resurrection of the body at the end of our days.

May our faith and trust in our Risen Lord, who continues to reveal to us each day his continued goodness, keep us strong through all the trials we endure, especially our current trials with the COVID-19 Pandemic, so that we may continue the race and the journey that we are currently on.