

***The Bells of St. Mary's***  
**The Church of the Immaculate Conception**

***Second Sunday of Easter***  
***Divine Mercy April 19, 2020***

**From Fr. Anthony Ekanem, MSP**

.. DOUBTING THOMAS ..

In today's Gospel reading, we meet Doubting Thomas who missed one great opportunity when Jesus made His first post – Resurrection appearance to His people. Poor Thomas missed that one gathering and it turned out to be the one chance that really defined him and his witnessing. Each of us at certain stages in life has something in common with the apostle, Thomas because, at times, we too are troubled by doubts, reluctance, indifference etc. Instead of denying our doubts, in short, our struggle, let us take a look at how incredulous Thomas handled his struggle with doubt, because his response has a lot to do with an inward journey of Faith from unbelief to belief. "Unless I see the mark of the nails in His hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." (John 20:25). For Thomas, other's stories about Jesus' appearance sounded like a collective delusion. When Jesus appeared the third time, on the first day of the week, He called him by name and showed him His hands and side, said to him, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God.' Such a response by Thomas after seeing Jesus indeed showed something transforming had taken place deep within him – His unbelieving spirit moving to something substantial and solid.

The Second Reading from St Peter (1 Peter 1:3-9) makes a similar point that Jesus said to Thomas "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed." (John 20:29), even without seeing Jesus, the Early Christians believed in Him. They were compelled by the power of the risen Lord to share things, and others who saw them said, see how these people love themselves. By relating this well-known tradition concerning the unbelieving Thomas to reflect on, the writer of Gospel wants to shed further light on this point - Living Faith that urges people on to bear witness to the risen Lord. He indicates to us that even seeing as Thomas did is no guarantee of Faith. What matters most here is a true "Faith that comes from hearing the message, and the message comes through preaching Christ." (Romans 10:17)

Again, this act of submission expressed on the part of Thomas when he came to realize it was the Lord, uniquely brought him peace no one can offer. The answer to his quest brought about something extraordinary that the world cannot give; it is only God alone who can provide that peace and faith to handle the pressure of life or the weight of our sins. The story about Thomas has enabled us today to understand how essential Faith is in our daily lives. During this pandemic for instance, are we not all torn apart by doubts and disbelief about what leading medical history, or experts or administrators are telling us? Where do we place God in our struggles and conflicts?

The readings for this Sunday are also about God's Divine Mercy given to us even when we express doubts in our struggle to believe in the love and mercy of God. The opening prayer addresses the Father as "God of everlasting Mercy." In our Responsorial Psalm today from Psalm 118, we repeat three times, "His mercy endures forever!" God revealed His mercy, first and foremost, by sending His only begotten Son to become our Savior and Lord by His suffering, death, and Resurrection. His Divine Mercy is mainly administered to us in the celebration of the Sacrament of the Church as we can trace it to this portion of the Gospel of St John, 20 "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when He had this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sin you retain are retained."

This Sunday, too, is popularly known as Divine Mercy Sunday. Between 1930 and 1938, Christ appeared to Sister Faustina, a Sister of Mercy in Poland who initiated the Divine Mercy devotion. On April 30, 2000, the Sunday after Easter, Sister Faustina was colonized on the Feast of Divine Mercy. On Good Friday, 1937, Jesus requested that Blessed Faustina make a special novena before the Feast of Mercy, from Good Friday through the following Saturday. Jesus also asked that a picture of Himself according to the vision of His mercy painted. He gave her a chaplet to be recited and said that it was appropriate to pray the chaplet at three o'clock each afternoon (the Hour of Great Mercy).

Today's First Reading continues with four things that sustained the early Christians in their profession of Faith. Fidelity to:

- The teachings of the apostles (Word of God),
- The Sacraments (Breaking of Bread),
- The Liturgical prayers (Fellowship), and
- The Brotherhood (Practice of love).

It means that the whole community remained faithful, even when Jesus was no more physically present with them.

Tell me for sure, what are your sustaining values or your support system at home like, since going to Church, for now, is out?

Can we say like St Peter in his Epistle today, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in His great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead?" (1 Peter 1:3)

"Make sure you test positive for faith.

Stay 6ft from doubt.

And isolate from unbelief."

#### INFORMATION

#### **JOIN US FOR MASS LIVESTREAM BY GOING TO: [www.icmary103.com](http://www.icmary103.com)**

Our live stream Schedule will be as follows:

(The Spanish Masses will be in YouTube) Our schedule of Private Masses that will be livestreamed will be as follows:

- .. Saturday: 5:00 PM English
- .. Sunday: 11:00 AM English

The Spanish Masses will be in YouTube

.. Thursday: 7:00 PM Spanish

.. Saturday: 7:30 PM Spanish

.. Sunday: 9:00 AM Spanish

All Weekday Mass intentions are being celebrated by the priests privately

Please go to the website about 15 minutes before the posted time to join the English livestream. There is a 30 second delay on the video feed. A recording of the Spanish Saturday 7:30 PM will be uploaded to YouTube.

**CONTINUED FINANCIAL SUPPORT** We urge all who can to please consider joining the online WeShare automated giving program by going to: <https://icmary.churchgiving.com/> to set up automatic giving to keep our staff, clergy, and buildings ready for us when this crisis ends, as it will. After the page opens, look around WeShare at the collection opportunities and click on the yellow button, "Make a Donation", and follow directions. God bless you for your continuing sacrifices.

While we are still able to keep our churches open for private prayer you will see collection boxes In the Church. Please place your collection envelopes or any contribution you wish to make to help support our parish, staff and our utility expenses. Or you can mail or drop your envelope at the Parish Office.

Thank you for supporting the work of Jesus Christ!

#### **Sundays Readings:**

**First Reading:** Acts of the Apostles 2: 42-47 (43A)

Early Christians adhere to apostolic teaching. Center their lives on prayer, the breaking of the bread, the common life, and charity.

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 118: 2-4, 13-15, 22-24 Give thanks to the Lord for his is good, his love is everlasting.

**Second Reading:** 1 Peter 1: 3-9 Through God's great mercy, Christians have new life in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The goal is salvation.

**Gospel:** John 20: 19-31 Through locked doors the risen Lord came, stood before the disciples, and said, "Peace be with you." Thomas was not present at first; when he saw Jesus, he could not believe. Jesus conquered his doubt.

#### **Religious Education**

There will be no Religious Education classes until further notice from the Archdiocese.

When public schools resume classes will begin for Religious Education.

Blessings to all the families of the Religious Education program of St. Mary's. Continue to pray together as a family, study and share your faith . God bless you!

#### **Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal**

I hope you had a wonderful Easter weekend. As you may know from the email from Msgr. LaMorte, the Development Office was given the directive from Cardinal Dolan to reach out to parishioners on his behalf regarding the 2020 Appeal. I just wanted to check with you to get your approval to reach out to your parishioners in the next few weeks. I can understand how these times have been very stressful for you so I just wanted to make it clear that the calls will be made on behalf of the Cardinal and NOT you or your parish. Please email me back with your approval or if you have any questions, comments or concerns. Thank you, I hope you stay safe and well!

Sincerely, Celeste Kabemba Campaign Manager

The Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal: To donate you can go to [cardinalsappeal.org](http://cardinalsappeal.org), click on Donate, select an amount, and direct your gift to our Church:

#567 Immaculate Conception, Yonkers

**Mass Intentions for the Week of  
Of April 18 to April 26, 2020**

**Saturday, April 18, 2020**

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

5:00 pm - Bridget Obaseki Birthday Blessing

7:30 pm - Acción De Gracias \* Johanna Torres

**Second of Easter Sunday, April 19, 2020**

7:30 pm - For the Parishioners/Para los Parroquianos

9:00 am - Margot Navarro + \* Ofelia Otero

11:00 am - For our Parish /Para Nuestra Parroquia

**Monday, April 20, 2020**

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

**Tuesday April 21, 2020**

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

**Wednesday, April 22, 2020**

8:15 am - Albert Miculsky + \* Mr. & Mrs. Michael Martin

12:05 pm - Columba L. Ekanem +

**Thursday, April 23, 2020**

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

7:00 pm - Available/Disponibile

**Friday, April 24, 2020**

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

**Saturday, April 25, 2020**

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

5:00 pm - Available/Disponibile

7:30 pm - Héctor Marmolejos + \* De La Familia

**Sunday, April 26, 2020**

7:30 pm - For the Parishioners/Para los Parroquianos

9:00 am - Bartolina Frias y Ramon Serrano + \* Eladio Serrano y Familia

11:00 am - Juvenil Antao + Eduardo & Esther Rodrigues

*+Indicates deceased \*Indicates the person (s) who requested the Mass.*