[Acts 5:12-16](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/acts/5?12)

Many signs and wonders were done among the people at the hands of the apostles. They were all together in Solomon’s portico. None of the others dared to join them, but the people esteemed them. Yet more than ever, believers in the Lord, great numbers of men and women, were added to them. Thus they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and mats so that when Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on one or another of them. A large number of people from the towns in the vicinity of Jerusalem also gathered, bringing the sick and those disturbed by unclean spirits, and they were all cured.

[Ps 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/118?2)

R  (1) Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.
Let the house of Israel say, “His mercy endures forever.”
Let the house of Aaron say, “His mercy endures forever.”
Let those who fear the LORD say, “His mercy endures forever.”
R  Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.
I was hard pressed and was falling, but the LORD helped me.
My strength and my courage is the LORD, and he has been my savior.
The joyful shout of victory in the tents of the just:
R  Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.
The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.
By the LORD has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes.
This is the day the LORD has made; let us be glad and rejoice in it.
R  Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.

[Rev 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/revelation/1?9)

I, John, your brother, who share with you the distress, the kingdom, and the endurance we have in Jesus, found myself on the island called Patmos because I proclaimed God’s word and gave testimony to Jesus. I was caught up in spirit on the Lord’s day and heard behind me a voice as loud as a trumpet, which said, “Write on a scroll what you see.” Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me, and when I turned, I saw seven gold lampstands and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, wearing an ankle-length robe, with a gold sash around his chest.
When I caught sight of him, I fell down at his feet as though dead. He touched me with his right hand and said, “Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last, the one who lives. Once I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever. I hold the keys to death and the etherworld.
Write down, therefore, what you have seen, and what is happening, and what will happen afterwards.” Alleluia

[Jn 20:19-31](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/john/20?19)

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.
The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”
Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”
Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “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!” Jesus said to him, “Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.” Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

Welcome to the Second Sunday of Easter, Divine Mercy Sunday.

The Church looks at these eight days, from Easter Sunday until today, as one single feast, the Octave of Easter. We reflect on a single event: The resurrection of Christ.

Pope Benedict said, the resurrection is, “the core of Christianity, the bedrock of our faith, the powerful lever of our certainties, the great wind that blows away all fear and indecision, all doubt and human calculation.” He went on to say, “Only from God can the decisive change of the world come. Only by going back to the Resurrection can the true nature of the Church and of her witness be understood.”

On May 23rd, 2000, Pope John Paul II decreed that, “throughout the world, the Second Sunday of Easter will receive the name Divine Mercy Sunday.” Some of you may know that this feast of Divine Mercy stems from a series of private revelations given by our Lord to a simple Polish nun by the name of Sister Maria Faustina Kowalska in the 1930’s.

St. Faustina records in numerous places in her diary Jesus’ desire that a liturgical feast be instituted in honor of His mercy on the Second Sunday of Easter.

The theme of God's mercy runs through the readings. In the First Reading, we see an outpouring of God's mercy through the hands of the Apostles, who are given a gift of God's power for the healing of physical illnesses and those plagued by evil spirits.

Jesus' love for the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits was evident during His own earthly ministry, and continues as His Spirit works through the Apostles. Jesus' mercy for the sick continues to be expressed in the life of the Church down to the present day.

It is widely and intentionally forgotten in today’s society that the concept of the "hospital" is an invention of the Catholic Church, beginning with the sick being gathered into churches in order to care for them. The traditional nurses' outfit - now largely replaced with "scrubs"- was in fact an adaptation of a women's religious habit, and in some languages, German for example, the word for "nurse" means "sister for the sick" still shows the origin of the profession in women's religious orders. To this day, the Catholic Church operates, through its subsidiaries, the world's largest health system, and cares for more sick persons than any other institution on the planet. Amazing!

Despite the denial ofthe reality ofthe spirit world by the contemporary academia and modern society, the Church steadfastly maintains the truth concerning the demonic, and offers those who are afflicted spiritual healing through the sacraments (particularly Baptism and Confession) and, ifnecessary, other forms ofministry, for example, solemn exorcism. Canon law requires each diocese to have a designated exorcist. While this requirement has not been observed in the recent past, happily in many dioceses, it is being restored, and newly appointed priest-exorcists are finding themselves immediately busy. The Church is the Body of Christ and continues to bring the mercy ofJesus to all of humanity.

The Responsorial Psalm is a *Todah* or "thanksgiving" psalm that has pride of place in the most solemn liturgy ofthe Church Year (the Easter Vigil) and a key role in this Sunday's Mass as well.

It is important to know that Psalm 118 is the conclusion ofa set of psalms (Pss 113-118) known in Jewish tradition as the "Hallel" or the "Praise", which continues to be recited during the Passover liturgy and during other festivals including Pentecost. When the Gospels speak of Jesus and the Apostles "singing a hymn" during the Last Supper (Matt 26:30; Mark 14:26, NABRE), it is likely that this refers to the chanting of the Hallel, which concluded with Psalm 118. It is extremely striking to carefully read Psalm 118 in its entirety, keeping in mind that Jesus recited this psalm on His own lips before leaving the Upper Room to go to Gethsemane and begin His Passion. Look up versus 17 – 23.

Our Second reading comes from The Book of Revelation. The Book of Revelation shows us a vision of heaven right now, and a vision of the future of human history, when human history and heavenly reality will ultimately convene. At the end of the Book of Revelation, the mercy of God makes its ultimate triumph, as those who receive God's mercy come to live with Him forever in a reality described under the figure and image of the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev 21-22).

In this opening vision of Revelation for this Sunday's Mass, John, beholds Jesus in His risen glory in the heavenly temple. Jesus is dressed as a priest, adorned with the ankle-length robe and sash that characterized the attire of the high-ranking priests who served in the Temple.

The priestly role in the Old Testament was primarily one of dispensing God's mercy. The priest offered sacrifice on behalf of worshipers so that their sins could be forgiven; they also were empowered to bless people with the name of God.

God's mercy is demonstrated in so many ways throughout our Gospel passage.

First we notice that this is the first time Jesus meets the disciples as a group after his Resurrection. The last time He saw this band of eleven men, He was looking at their backs, in the dark, as they all ran away from Him rather than accompany Him through His suffering and death (Matt 26:56). But Jesus does not mention this. Instead, He overlooks their abandoning Him and their lack of faith, and simply tells them, "Peace be with you."

Continuing from the Last Supper (John 13-17) as if nothing had happened, Jesus completes the commissioning of the Apostles that He had begun at that meal: **“He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."**

Having shown them mercy, He ordains them as agents of divine mercy, empowering them to forgive sin. The forgiveness of sins was administered by priests in the Old Testament; thus Jesus is commissioning the Apostles to a priestly role in the New Covenant. The Church has always known that this authority to forgive sins was handed on to the Apostles' successors because there is always need of this ministry down through the generations of the people of God. So we see in these verses the seed and essential nature of the sacraments we now call "Holy Orders" and "Reconciliation."

Thomas is not present and denies the reports given to him from his fellow Apostles. Jesus "goes the second mile" for Thomas. He does not leave him in unbelief but makes a special appearance just for him.

And when He does appear to Thomas, He doesn't rebuke Thomas for his lack of faith but is there for Thomas to relieve any doubts Thomas had.

Jesus treats many of us the same way, giving us extra signs of His presence to encourage us, even though our faith should have been strong enough to do without such consolations.

Jesus' last words in this passage pronounce a blessing on those of us who hear this Gospel proclaimed with believing hearts: "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

Yes, we are blessed indeed, because our faith allows us to know and experience the mercy of God. This feast of the Divine Mercy reminds us that Jesus loves us and wants to forgive us our sins. We need to not miss such a great opportunity to make peace with Him and our brothers and sisters by taking advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, by us forgiving and reconciling with our brothers and sisters in Christ, and by our works of love and mercy for others.

Now, more than ever, we must turn to Jesus and ask for His infinite mercy. We need to make the motto of Divine Mercy our own: Jesus, I trust in you.

Please join us at 3:00 PM in the chapel for Adoration, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, and Benediction.