



## **SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER – APRIL 12, 2026**

Acts 2:42-47

1 Peter 1:3-9

John 20:19-31

Spring is coming soon – we hope. Soon I will be driving on Highway 172 heading east and I will see the soccer fields filled with our youth playing soccer. Anyone here play soccer at some point in your life?

I begin my reflection today with a story that takes place on the soccer field.

### **Seeing the whole field**

It was a great moment in kids' soccer: A six-year-old player got the ball and kicked a line drive 20 yards out for a goal — this in a league of players who have trouble simply kicking 20 yards, let alone scoring. Fans roared and teammates cheered.

But not the coach. After the play, the coach took the boy aside. The coach was not smiling. Then, unbelievably, the coach took the boy out of the game.

What was going on?

He was teaching the youngster a valuable lesson. After congratulating the boy for the long goal, the coach asked him to name two team members who were closer to the goal when he shot — and to whom he could have passed the ball to assure that the team would score. Without scolding his young player, the coach left him on the bench until he could remember those players' names.

The coach's standard was simple: An assist is as good as a goal. Making good things possible was the point — and those who helped were as much stars as those who scored.

Not surprisingly, that team of kids became nearly unbeatable.

[Adapted from **Insights on Leadership.**]

This coach instills in his young player the vision that Jesus calls his followers to embrace. Always keep the bigger picture in front of you.

Jesus begins with offering the apostles peace, as they are hiding in a room fearful for their lives. The authorities killed Jesus, their leader, and they might be next. Jesus' appearance is to comfort them and to energize them for their mission to share the Good News of his life, death and resurrection. His peace does not depend on the circumstances but comes from his presence in their lives. Resurrection says he is present then and now for us.

Divine Mercy Sunday came about through the visions the Lord gave St. Maria Faustina with St. Pope John Paul II declaring this weekend Divine Mercy Sunday.

There's nothing wrong with that designation, but God's divine mercy is every day, not just this weekend. That is the big picture, that Jesus wanted us to know by his life, death and resurrection. The Lord is not a mathematician counting our sins, he is a lover welcoming us home every day. We are not to live in fear, which often leads to sin. We are to live in his love.

Like the young six-year-old playing soccer who had that fantastic soccer goal, we can easily focus on ourselves and miss our teammates around us. Our world is too small.

The Lord says look at the bigger picture, which we will continue to hear throughout this Easter season.

The same Jesus Christ who forgave Peter, who had denied knowing Him three times, the same Jesus Christ who brought comfort to Thomas in our gospel today, is the same Jesus Christ reaching out to us, especially through the bread and wine we share today.

Prayer: Bringing Home the Word.