



The Catholic Community of Divine Savior

Family Faith Focus

Volume 9, Issue 37

April 11, 2021

Dates to Remember

- April 10: 4:00 PM Mass
- April 11: 9:00 AM Mass
- Please see our parish website for reservation information and links to view Sunday or weekday Masses online.

Divine Mercy Sunday

"In today's Gospel, the Apostle Thomas personally experiences this mercy of God. . . . And how does Jesus react? With patience: Jesus does not abandon Thomas in his stubborn unbelief . . . He does not close the door, He waits. And Thomas acknowledges his own poverty, his little faith. "My Lord and my God!": with this simple yet faith-filled invocation, he responds to Jesus' patience. He lets himself be enveloped by Divine Mercy; he sees it before his eyes, in the wounds of Christ's hands and feet and in His open side, and he discovers trust."

— Pope Francis

Second Sunday of Easter

John 20: 19-31

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

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.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Sunday Gospel Connection: April 11, 2021

Second Sunday of Easter, Cycle B

John 20: 19-31

Gospel Background: The Gospels tell us that Jesus appeared to the disciples on several occasions after they discovered that his tomb was empty. Part of the mystery of Jesus' Resurrection is that he appeared to his disciples not as a spirit but in bodily form. The bodily form was not one that the disciples recognized though. In John's Gospel, Mary of Magdala does not recognize that the figure standing before her is Jesus until he speaks to her. In Luke's Gospel the disciples who meet Jesus on the road to Emmaus do not recognize him until he breaks bread with them. The resurrected Jesus had a physical presence, but the disciples couldn't recognize Jesus unless he allowed them to. His resurrected body, nonetheless, showed the marks of his crucifixion.



From readings such as today's Gospel, we also see that in his resurrected body, Jesus seems to be free of physical constraints. He appears to the disciples despite the fact that the doors were locked.

Jesus greets his disciples with the gift of peace and the gift of the Holy Spirit. In doing so, Jesus commissions his disciples to continue the work that he has begun: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." During the meeting, Jesus also shows the integral connection between forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The story of Thomas illustrates our Christian experience today: We are called to believe without seeing. In fact, all Christians after the first witnesses have been called to believe without seeing. Thomas's doubt is hardly surprising; the news of Jesus' appearance was incredible to the disciples who had seen him crucified and buried. Thomas's human nature compelled him to want hard evidence that the Jesus who appeared to the disciples after his death was indeed the same Jesus who had been crucified. Thomas is given the opportunity to act on that desire. He is our witness that Jesus is really risen.

Our faith is based on the witness of the Church that has preceded us, beginning with Thomas and the first disciples. Through Baptism we receive the same Holy Spirit that Jesus brought to the first disciples. We are among those who are "blessed" because we believe without having seen.

Family Connection: Many of us can relate to Thomas's response to the news that the disciples had seen Jesus. We want to see for ourselves too, but we grow in faith, trusting the experience and knowledge of others.

Many of us have heard the saying "Seeing is believing." As your family gathers, take some time to consider what that saying means. What are some things we believe because we see them? Is there anything we believe without seeing? Today's Gospel reminds us that faith sometimes asks us to believe things we cannot see with our eyes. Read today's Gospel, John 20:19-31, with your family. Think about Thomas's response to the reports about the risen Lord. Is Thomas's doubt reasonable? How does Jesus respond to Thomas? Jesus grants Thomas the evidence that Thomas needs to believe, but Jesus also affirms the faith of those who will be called upon to believe without first-hand experience. We are among those whom Jesus calls blessed. Discuss with your family the basis of each member's faith in Jesus—the witness of the first disciples, the Gospels, the continuing activity of the Holy Spirit, the community of the Church.

Pray together that your faith in Jesus will be strong. Pray an act of faith together.

For more information and Sunday Connection resources visit:

<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/sunday-connection/second-sunday-of-easter-cycle-b-sunday-connection/>

LOYOLA PRESS.
A JESUIT MINISTRY

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER



That Our Joy Might Be Complete

O God,
from the beginning you prepared us,
making us in your image,
sharing with us every good gift,
revealing yourself to us over the ages,
until in the incarnation, you broke
into history
in a new way, doing a new thing.
You give us your life.

Help us to honor that gift,
that we might use the life we have been
given to serve
and be willing to lay it down with the hope
that we might rise like Jesus,
and that our joy might be complete.
We ask this through Christ Our Lord.
Amen.

April 11, 2021
Our Joy Overflows

Today's readings: Acts 4:32–35; Psalm 118:2–4, 13–15, 22–24; 1 John 5:1–6; John 20:19–31. When Jesus appears in a locked room and says, “Peace be with you,” the apostles rejoice that their Lord is present. Jesus then breathes on them, giving them the Spirit, and commissions them. Their joy in the Resurrection is not theirs alone.

The new life that comes from God, the new life where there was only death, changes the Twelve. Acts tells us that, in the early Church, the needs of all were met. The Christian community was part of the inauguration of the kingdom of justice and peace, and a sign of the kingdom. Therefore in their community, the demands of justice were recognized.

Our Easter joy should bubble up within us and be poured out. The joy should inspire us toward service and self-sacrifice in imitation of Jesus. Whose needs in your community are going unmet? Bring an Easter basket to a homebound member of your parish, and sit and visit for an hour. Pick up a package of diapers on your next trip to the store, and drop them at a center that serves families or women in crisis pregnancies. Volunteer to serve at a soup kitchen, and be present as you smile and greet the guests. Call a person who seems lonely, and set up a time to talk. When you find a need and meet it, others peer through a window into the coming kingdom.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, April 12

Reading Acts

The first reading each day has been making its way through the Acts of the Apostles, as it does each Easter season. We hear about the early Christians' preaching, teaching, and healing, and what occurred as a result. Acts is filled with drama and adventure. During this Easter season, try to read the entire book. Be inspired by those who "were filled with the holy Spirit and continued to speak of God with boldness." *Today's readings: Acts 4:23–31; Psalm 2:1–3, 4–7a, 7b–9; John 3:1–8.*

Tuesday, April 13

No Needy Person among Us

In the early Christian Church, the community cared for one another. Most homeless shelters have a constant need for basics, such as socks and underwear. Imagine how profound a need this is for those who lack them. Buy a few pairs of socks or underwear, and take them to a place in your community that serves those who are without a home. *Today's readings: Acts 4:32–37; Psalm 93:1ab, 1cd–2, 5; John 3:7b–15.*

Wednesday, April 14

We Cannot Help But Proclaim It

"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life." The early Christians could not help but proclaim the Good News in word and deed, and we are called to continue to do so. How can you bring those around you into the light of God's love? *Today's readings: Acts 5:17–26; Psalm 34:2–3, 4–5, 6–7, 8–9; John 3:16–21.*

Thursday, April 15

Continue the Celebration

One of the beautiful things about Easter is that for fifty days we celebrate our joy. Do something that reflects an Easter custom today. When my children were little, we hid plastic eggs all over the house throughout the Easter season. It was a fun way to keep the joy of the season present for us. You might continue to add flowers to a prayer area in your home, or adorn it with white and gold, to help you to be present in the season and remind those you love that we are still in the season of celebration. Consider also making a lamb cake or getting special Easter treats at the store. *Today's readings: Acts 5:27–33; Psalm 34:2 and 9, 17–18, 19–20; John 3:31–36.*

Friday, April 16

Loaves and Fishes

In the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, we see the Eucharist. Go to Mass or adoration today. Take this opportunity to thank Jesus for the great gift of himself in the Eucharist. Receive this gift and go out into the world and love as he does. *Today's readings: Acts 5:34–42; Psalm 27:1, 4, 13–14; John 6:1–15.*

Saturday, April 17

Called to Serve

We hear about the apostles choosing assistants and laying their hands on these men, including Stephen, who would be the first Christian martyr. They were called by God to serve the needs of the community so that no one would be left at the margins. God is calling you to use your gifts to serve as well. How is God calling you today? Do you think the path of following that call is always going to be easy? *Today's readings: Acts 6:1–7; Psalm 33:1–2, 4–5, 18–19; John 6:16–21.*

