# Second Sunday of Easter

**Gospel text (*Jn* 20:19-31):** 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.

***"Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them"***

Fr. Fernando VÁZQUEZ-DODERO Romero
*(Terrassa, Barcelona, Spain)*

Today the Church invites us to celebrate the mercy of the Lord—that immense and tender love of God, who loves us even though we are so little. Throughout Holy Week we have contemplated how far our misery can reach and, above all, how great and merciful the love of God truly is.

In today's Gospel we find another sign that His love wants to reach even the darkest corners of our hearts. We see how Jesus Christ desires to forgive sins through His disciples: "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them" (Jn 20:23). God loves us so much that He always desires to forgive us. He wants to be present in our whole life and in our history; He wants to descend into the depths of our sin in order to love us and transform us completely, in everything that touches our person.

Pope Leo XIV, reflecting on Holy Saturday, said: "It is the day in which heaven visits earth most deeply. It is the time in which every corner of human history is touched by the light of Easter. And if Christ was able to descend all the way down there, nothing can be excluded from his redemption. Not even our nights, not even our oldest faults, not even our broken bonds. There is no past so ruined, no history so compromised that it cannot be touched by mercy."

Such is the love of God: a love unlike any other, a love that embraces our misery and wants to forgive us in order to restore us always to the light. And He wants to do this in an even more surprising way: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (Jn 20:21). That is to say, He wants to do it through the Church, by means of other men—the priests—who are also sinners, like the one who goes to confession, yet called to be witnesses and instruments of His mercy.

## *Thoughts on Today's Gospel*

- "And from Thee, O Lord, unto whose eyes the abyss of man's conscience is naked, what could be hidden in me though I would not confess it?." (Saint Augustine)

- "Many times we think that going to confession is like going to the dry cleaner. But Jesus in the confessional is not a dry cleaner. Confession it is an encounter with Jesus but with this Jesus who waits for us just as we are." (Francis)

- "Christ is at work in each of the sacraments. He personally addresses every sinner: 'My son, your sins are forgiven' (Mk 2;5). He is the physician tending each one of the sick who need him to cure them. He raises them up and reintegrates them into fraternal communion. Personal confession is thus the form most expressive of reconciliation with God and with the Church." (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 1484)

## *Other comments*

***“Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them”***

Fr. Joan Ant. MATEO i García
*(Tremp, Lleida, Spain)*

Today, on the Second Sunday of Easter, we complete the octave of this liturgical season, one of the two octaves —together with Christmas— that remain in the liturgy renewed by the Vatican Council II. For eight days, we contemplate the same mystery and try to deepen our understanding of it in the light of the Holy Spirit.

By the design of Pope Saint John Paul II, this Sunday is Divine Mercy Sunday. It is something that goes far beyond a particular devotion. As explained by the Holy Father in his encyclical Dives in Misericordia, Divine Mercy is the loving manifestation of God in a history wounded by sin. In Latin “Misericordia” (which means “mercy”) comes from two words: “miser” (misery) and “cor, cordis” (heart). God puts our unhappy situation due to sin in His Father's heart, which is faithful to His plans. Jesus Christ, dead and risen, is the supreme manifestation and action of Divine Mercy. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (Jn 3:16) and sent Him to death so that we might be saved. "To redeem the slave, He sacrificed the Son," we proclaimed in the Easter Vigil. And once resurrected, He made Him a source of salvation for all who believe in Him. Through faith and conversion, we receive the treasure of Divine Mercy.

The Holy Mother Church, which wants her children to live the life of the Risen One, commands that we receive Holy Communion and do so in the grace of God —at least during the Easter season. Indeed, the Easter season is the opportune time for paschal fulfillment. It is a good time to confess our sins and to receive the forgiveness of our sins through the faculties that the risen Lord has conferred on his Church, when he said only to the Apostles: "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them" (Jn 20:22-23). Thus, we will go to the sources of Divine Mercy. And let us not hesitate to bring our friends to these sources of life: the Eucharist and Penance. The risen Jesus counts on us.