

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER [A] ~ Divine Mercy Sunday

Acts 2: 42 - 47

1 Peter 1: 3 - 9

John 20: 19 – 31

“He took up our pain and bore our suffering. He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.” Is. 53: 4 – 5

We heard those words from the Prophet Isaiah, describing the One whom the Lord would send to save His people, on Good Friday afternoon at the beginning of our reliving of the Lord’s Passion. They tell us, directly from the Lord’s mouth, the depths of His mercy toward us: His ‘Passion’ to save us from sin and death.

They show us, as The Bard said, that: “The quality of mercy is not strain'd, it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven. It is an attribute to God himself.” The Merchant of Venice, Act IV, Scene I

It shows us mercy is at the heart of God: that the Lord’s mercy is not ‘strain’d’ – it isn’t constrained, it’s freely given.

That’s what Peter tells us in the second reading: “It is by [the Father’s] great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead.” 1 Pt. 1: 3

And Peter knew that only too well from the Lord pouring His mercy over him when, in that Upper Room, Jesus showed Peter the wounds of His Passion, breathed His Spirit over him, and said:

“Peace be with you.” Jn. 20: 21

Then, Peter knew for certain that God’s mercy and forgiveness is greater than any sin.

Thomas, too, knew that God’s mercy and forgiveness is greater than any sin when the Lord came especially to him, and let him touch His wounds.

Thomas had doubted: we all doubt at times, don’t we?

But the Lord waits for us, and He always has mercy on us, and forgives us.

And that’s because He’s the God of mercy: He doesn’t tire of forgiving us. It’s we who are tired of asking for forgiveness, but the Lord never gets tired.

You know, if the Lord were the CEO of a global, multi-national company dealing in mercy, from a business standpoint, He’d never make a profit because He’s always giving mercy for free.

He’d be bankrupt!

But He gives His mercy freely for this very reason; He: “Is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead.” Eph. 2: 4

Too often we forget that, and live in fear; just like the Disciples on that first Easter morning.

Now, a week later, they’re still there: even though on that Easter morning Jesus had come to them, showed them His hands and His side, and calmed them with His indwelling Spirit.

We may not literally be hiding behind locked doors, but what locks us in is our fears, and insecurities; the past hurts we’ve experienced, our doubts, uncertainties, and our sin.

I feel like that too – I have difficulties and doubts like anyone else – but underneath all of that is the knowledge that Jesus loves me just as I am.

He is the treasure in my heart; and, just as Jesus was rich in mercy toward His Disciples, that’s how He is with us.

He wants us to unlock the door of our heart to let Him in so that we can enjoy a deep, abiding friendship with Him.

We live 2000 or so years on from the Resurrection of Jesus, which means we’ve maybe become blasé about it.

Maybe we've closed the door of our heart and mind to the reality of the Resurrection, instead of allowing it to become: "Woven indelibly into our hearts and our brains." Paul Simon: Train In The Distance

But the Living Jesus isn't stopped by locked doors – He's unstoppable – Jesus ignores locked doors; just as He ignored the stone that locked Him in His tomb.

The Lord walked into the middle of that locked room to release Thomas so that he could blossom into the image and likeness of his Lord and God – and He'll do the same for us if we just ask Him to. At the end of the Gospel today, John says that those things he's recorded about Jesus in 'this book' – his Gospel – are there so that we: "May come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name." Jn. 20:31

Today, may we hear the voice of Jesus saying to us: "Stop doubting and believe" [and, with Thomas, confess Jesus to be] "My Lord and my God." Jn. 20: 27 - 28

Then we can unlock the door, and walk: "Out of shadows and images into truth." To receive: "The outcome of [our] faith, the salvation of [our] souls." Blessed John Henry Newman's Epitaph and 1Pt. 1: 9