

## **Second Sunday of Easter: Divine Mercy C/2010**

As human beings, we are social beings. We live in society with people with whom we share our life. In order to enjoy life and to confront its difficulties, we count on one another. As we need another's company, we need their inspiration in order to keep going.

One of the consequences of living together is that we have to trust one another. If we do not do so, in the long run, life becomes impossible. This fact, instead of being fortuitous, is fundamental to our human nature, but it is also true for the life of faith. That is what today's readings try to bring to our meditation as they describe the life of the early Church and its unity around the person of our Lord Jesus.

In fact, the early Church was a powerful community where the presence of Jesus was visible through the signs and wonders performed in his name. The apostles were all together in prayer and were esteemed by everybody because of the quality of their life. Some of those who joined them could experience with their own eyes the defeat of evil, the healing of sickness and the advance of the kingdom of God.

All these things happened, not because of the apostle's power as though they were acting on their behalf, but because of the risen Jesus. It was the risen Jesus who was driving them and operating signs and wonders through them.

The book of Revelation gives us an idea of what Jesus has become after his death on the cross. The truth it reveals to us is that Jesus shares power with God. Those who trust him should not be afraid; everything that he touches becomes alive. He was once dead, but is now alive forever. He was at the beginning of everything that exists, but he is also at the end of everything. There is no life without him, because he holds the keys to death and the nether world. If so, what shall we do?

We have to trust him; we have to believe everything that is transmitted to us through the Scripture about Jesus' resurrection. In fact, Christian faith is, above all, trust in God. Such a trust is not based on some proof or experience, but on the testimony of those who have been with Jesus from his beginning until his last day on earth. It is that testimony the apostles have given that has come to us today. That is why Jesus says in today's Gospel: "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed".

All that helps us understand the reproach of Jesus to Thomas when he says, "Do not be unbelieving, but believe". With these words, Jesus would like to tell him to trust the testimony given to him and the witness of his friends, that he is alive.

Another point we find in the Gospel is the fact that, once Thomas was in the presence of Jesus, he was incapable of putting his fingers in his scars. What all this tries to tell us is that the most important is not to see or to touch God's mysteries, but to approach him with an interior attitude of openness of heart. That is why faith can never be founded on what one sees. How many people had seen the miracles of Jesus in his time and did not come to believe in him?

Another thing we learn from the Gospel is about the mistake of Thomas. In fact, Thomas had separated himself from the group of the twelve after the death of Jesus. He sought loneliness rather than togetherness. So when Jesus appeared to the other apostles, he was not with them.

This episode teaches us that we miss a great deal when we separate ourselves from the Church as community and try to be alone. There are things which can happen to us within the community of the Church which cannot happen when we are alone. There are graces God gives to us when we are together with others in the Church than when we isolate ourselves. When we are struck by misfortune, for instance, people tend to isolate themselves and avoid the Church. And yet, it is in this moment that we need most the support and consolation of our fellow Christians.

In order to empower his disciples, the risen Christ brings them peace. This is an important gift we have to ask constantly of the Lord. As a matter of fact, Jesus knows well that we live in a troubled world, where we are confronted with difficult issues of life. At times, our projects of life have been broken and our dreams turned into nightmares. Jesus comes to assure us that he does not abandon us; he brings us his peace.

In order to maintain that peace alive in us, we need the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to keep the peace of Christ within us and to spread it around us. The Holy Spirit is the strength without which we cannot please God. The transformation we see in the disciples after the resurrection of Jesus comes precisely from the Holy Spirit they have received.

In order to be in peace with God, with ourselves and our fellows, Jesus gives us another gift, the sacrament of reconciliation. "Receive the Holy spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained", Jesus says. This sacrament is left to the Church and exercised in the name of Jesus by the priests. When this sacrament is practiced with sincerity of heart and confidence in the Holy Spirit, it brings us the interior healing we really need. This Sunday of the Divine Mercy reminds us that Jesus loves us and wants to forgive us our sins. Let us not miss such an opportunity to make peace with him.

Let us remember that Christ is present, in an invisible way, in our midst. Anytime we gather in his name, he is present. But we also manifest the presence of Jesus when we care for the poor and the needy. Our testimony to the resurrection of Jesus has to be done not only in words and speech, but also in deeds of solidarity and sharing with the needy. Let us ask the Lord to help us build a community with a lifestyle that witnesses to his resurrection. May God bless you!

**Acts 5, 12-16; Revelation 1, 9-11, 12-13, 17-19; John 20, 19-31**



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