

2nd Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday)  
(Acts 5:12-16 / John 20:19-31)  
24.04.2022

Dear brothers and sisters,

“In the evening of the day of the Resurrection, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews”. What was happening in the hearts and minds of the disciples on that evening? Why were they filled with fear? Jesus in whom they had placed their trust had been put to death unjustly and violently because of his fidelity to the mission confided to Him by his heavenly Father. Jesus’ mission was to reveal God’s love for all people without exception not only by what He said but also by his miracles and works of healing which confirmed his words. Jesus had spoken and acted not only in God’s name, but, in his person, as God himself. All that did not please the majority of the Jews. His disciples had begun to trust and hope in Him. They were identified by the Jewish authorities as Jesus’ closest followers. We can understand then they could rightly expect to share the same fate as Jesus. We can well imagine their fear and confusion, the questions arising in their minds: If Jesus’ ministry had ended so lamentably, they could legitimately ask themselves: Had they understood correctly what Jesus had said and done? Had they not been naive in having placed such confidence in Him?

It happens that we experience the same kind of fear and confusion in our lives. Let us think of what happened within us during the worst days of the pandemic, or when we listen at present to witnesses and look at images of the war in Ukraine, or when we are informed of a grave or terminal illness for our self or for a loved one, or when we are faced with the infidelity of someone we love dearly, or when we are suddenly made redundant without notice and explanation?

Let us come back to today’s gospel passage. In the midst of their fear and confusion, the Risen Jesus came and stood among his disciples. There, he extended a greeting of peace to them: “Peace be with you”! This was more than a conventional greeting. It was a message of reassurance and comfort. It was as if Jesus’ words totally transformed the situation and restored some sense of stability and confidence to the disciples. His presence and his greeting were a light in their darkness, a sign of hope beyond all hope in their situation of despair and distress, a presence in their isolation, a consolation in their desolation and depression. What happened in the lives of the disciples on the evening of Resurrection’s Day happens also in our lives in times of trials. If we open the door of our hearts to his presence, the Risen Lord comes to visit us with his gifts of peace and hope. He comes to open the doors of the tombs in which we have locked ourselves. He comes to open up a future before us.

It is interesting to note that in today’s gospel passage the visit of the Risen Christ occurred a second time, eight days later. This is an indication of the origin of our weekly celebration of Easter, every Sunday. This is also for us an indication that the Risen Lord who is always present within us, beside us, and between us in all our relationships, comes in a very special way to visit us when we gather together as a community, as Church, to keep the memory of the resurrection

of the Lord. We can come to our Sunday gatherings with our joys to express our gratitude to the Lord, and we can come to them with our worries to receive the peace the Lord wants to offer us.

The fact that the Risen Lord gives us a 'rendez-vous' or an appointment each and every Sunday is a sign of his mercy. On this second Sunday of Easter, we also celebrate the gift of Divine Mercy. The Risen Lord loves us. He is ever ready to listen and to speak to us. He gives himself to us as food and drink through the sacrament of his Body and Blood. He is compassionate, that is to say one who dares to suffer with us, and also one ready to rejoice with us. He is always ready to forgive us when we repent. The Lord is merciful indeed. We could never thank Him enough for his merciful love for his people, for each one of us personally.

The Risen Lord not only comes to give us his peace. He comes also to send us out on mission. The mission confided to us by the Risen Christ is an extension of his earthly mission. Like Jesus, we are called to reveal to the world God's love for all people... for each and every human being without exception. We have to bear witness to God's love for humankind with our words, and give flesh and weight to our words by loving our neighbour as ourselves. We have also to pray, asking the Lord to allow our mission to bear fruit. We receive the peace of the Risen Lord and we share his peace with all others.

At every Sunday Eucharist, the Risen Lord comes and says to each one of us: "Peace be with you". Let us go forth from this place today to say to all those we meet: May the peace of the Risen Lord be with you!