

2nd Sunday of Easter (A)
(Acts 2:42-47 / John 20:19-31)
12.04.2026
Feast of the Divine Mercy

Dear brothers and sisters,

In the gospel passage we heard on Easter Day, a week ago, you may recall that the Risen Lord revealed himself to a few disciples: Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter and John. These disciples were accorded the grace to experience the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus at the sight of the empty tomb: they saw and they believed. Jesus who had died on the Cross, and was buried three days before, was no longer in the tomb: He had risen from the dead. He was alive. What these disciples experienced were **personal encounters** with the Risen Lord.

This was a first step for those disciples as they experienced the presence of the Risen Lord. But this first step was not enough. The proof is that they remained shut up, closed in a house with locked doors for fear of the Jews. Their experience of the resurrection of Jesus did not dispel their fears. It did not yet have the power to give them peace, to awaken joy in their hearts. Their fear led them to keep all the doors securely closed. Their only concern was to be safe. Not one of them thought of the mission they had received from Jesus.

In today's gospel passage, the situation is completely different. The disciples do not encounter the Risen Lord individually. On the contrary, they are **gathered together** for their weekly liturgical remembrance of the Resurrection of the Lord. The Risen Christ comes into their midst and they are able to see Him. His presence within the community of disciples dispels their fears, fills them with peace and joy, and becomes for them the occasion to receive the Holy Spirit.

There is a lesson for us here. It is not enough to hear the Easter message. It is not enough to know that the Lord Jesus has risen from the dead. We also need to experience the presence of the Risen Lord in the midst of our community of faith, in our liturgical gatherings. It is only when the Risen Lord is at the centre of our community that he becomes a source of life, peace and joy for us. With Him, our fears disappear.

We are called to experience the presence of the Risen Lord not only as individuals, but also, and above all, as members of the people of God which is the Church, the community and liturgical assembly to which we belong. The Risen Lord does not manifest Himself to us merely as individual persons; rather, he reveals himself to his people with whom He made a covenant of love, and consequently to us as members of that people. Christian life is not about the Risen Lord and me, the Risen Lord and each one of us individually, but about the Risen Lord and us: the people of God, of which each of us is a member

When Jesus taught us to pray, He did not tell us to say 'my' Father but 'our' Father. He did not tell us to ask the Father for 'my' daily bread, but for 'our' daily bread. He did not tell us to ask for 'my' forgiveness as 'I' forgive, but for 'our' forgiveness as 'we' forgive. Our belonging to a community of faith, whatever form this may take, is essential. We cannot be an isolated or self-

sufficient Christian. We need the help of a community. It is in our community of faith that we experience the fullness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

From this perspective, we see how the synodal path on which the Church is engaged is not something new, something invented by Pope Francis, but something that is deeply rooted in the faith of the Apostolic Church. We are called to walk together, listening to what the Risen Lord says to us through one another's testimony and put the gospel into practice As a community of believers. Our vocation as Christians is not simply to do what the hierarchy tells us, but **to walk together**, to listen to one another and to discern together with the help of the Holy Spirit, under the oversight of the bishop. This is what the Lord is calling us to as Church today.

The Risen Lord joins us in our community of faith, delivers us from all our fears, fills our hearts and minds with peace and joy, and sends the Holy Spirit upon us for the forgiveness of our sins. In this way, He reveals God's mercy to us, God's divine plan of mercy. So, it is not surprising that Pope Saint John Paul the Second chose this second Sunday of Easter for the celebration of the Divine Mercy for his people.

To experience the presence of the Risen Lord in our liturgies and in your Christian gatherings, we must allow Him to take first place in our hearts, to be at the very centre. This is not as simple as it may seem. When we gather for our weekly celebration of the Resurrection, our behaviour can sometimes make the Risen Lord appear absent. This happens when we meet in His name but our hearts are elsewhere... when Jesus is absent from our hearts. It happens when we reduce the sign of peace to a mere greeting. It happens when the Gospel is proclaimed and acclaimed as the 'Word of God', yet we focus only on the preacher's words. The Word of God is far greater than any point the preacher will make based on the text, however powerful the preacher's words may be. Allowing the Risen Lord to take first place in our liturgies is not as simple as it seems, but it is something on which we can work, and around which we can make an effort.

Even if in our liturgies the Risen Lord is constantly preached, taught and celebrated, our hearts can become occupied with traditions, customs and routine practices which push Christ to the margins. What matters most is not simply arriving on time, paying attention beside whom we sit or don't sit, contributing to the collection, receiving communion and then driving off. What truly matters are those with whom we celebrate our liturgies. Together, we form the Body of Christ; we become a living expression of the presence of the Risen Lord. He speaks to us through one another.

We must place Christ at the centre of our celebration, a Jesus whom we know, love and follow with passion. We are not gathered together merely to fulfil a Sunday obligation, but to welcome wholeheartedly the Risen Christ who gives us peace and joy, sets us free from our fears and our sins, and whose presence contains a surprise element. This Sunday, may we be surprised by grace!