

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER *(Sunday of Divine Mercy)*

Easter is a season of resurrection, but for those of us who grew up in dysfunctional or unpredictable homes, new life often begins quietly. It begins in moments of awareness, when we recognize patterns we did not choose but have carried for years. Many of us learned to protect ourselves by withdrawing, controlling, pleasing others, or staying constantly alert. These responses helped us survive, but they can continue to shape our lives in ways that keep us stuck. Even as we begin recovery, we may carry a quiet question: Can mercy really reach these deeper parts of me? Divine Mercy Sunday meets that question with the presence of the risen Christ.

This Sunday's gospel reading brings us into a locked room where the disciples are gathered in fear. Jesus does not wait for them to feel safe or secure. He enters the space as it is and speaks peace (John 20:19-23):

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. 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."

For many adult children, "locked rooms" can represent the emotional spaces we learned to protect. We may struggle to trust others, to express our needs, or to believe that we are safe. Jesus enters these spaces not with pressure, but with peace. He does not force change. He offers presence.

The wounds that Jesus shows are not hidden or dismissed. They are transformed. In a similar way, recovery invites us

to acknowledge the impact of our past without becoming defined by it. The patterns we developed were often necessary at one time, but they may no longer serve us. Healing begins as we bring awareness and compassion to those patterns.

Step One invites us to admit that we are powerless over the past and over the ways it continues to influence us. This is not about blame. It is about honesty. As we release the need to control everything around us, we begin to open ourselves to God's grace.

The message of Divine Mercy reminds us that our identity is not rooted in our past experiences, but in God's love for us. The prayer "Jesus, I trust in you" can feel unfamiliar if trust was difficult to learn growing up. Yet over time, as we practice turning toward God and safe relationships, trust begins to grow.

The apostle Thomas' story can resonate deeply. We may find it hard to believe that change is possible or that we are worthy of love and stability. Yet Jesus meets Thomas in his doubt and invites him closer. He does not shame him for needing reassurance.

Recovery also shows us that our healing can become a gift to others. As we grow in awareness, boundaries, and self-compassion, we become more present and grounded in our relationships. Our experience can help others feel less alone in their own journey.

Divine Mercy Sunday reminds us that no part of our story is beyond redemption. The same Jesus who entered a locked room enters the guarded places of our hearts. He brings peace, offers mercy, and invites us to trust. As

we continue in recovery, we are learning that healing is possible and that we do not have to walk this path alone.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When have you noticed yourself withdrawing or protecting yourself in ways that once felt necessary?

- What does allowing God into those "locked rooms" look like for you right now?

- How is your healing helping you show up differently in your relationships?

MASS READINGS

FIRST READING Acts 2:42-47

RESP. PS. Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

SECOND READING 1 Peter 1:3-9

GOSPEL John 20:19-31