

Sunday of Divine Mercy



Alleluia! Christ is risen!

We have journeyed together throughout Lent in hopeful anticipation of Christ's Resurrection. Celebrating the Good News that comes with the empty tomb, we live to testify to the hope offered by our Savior who bore the sins of the world so that we might have eternal life. This is especially good news for those impacted by the family spiritual disease of addiction who tend to suffer from a sense of isolation and shame.

We have been crucified by the pain of addiction only to be offered resurrection through mercy and self-discovery. We were saved and called to teach those who suffer. We show our wounds to the newcomer trying to make sense of their situation, to the sage old timer, and to the complacent member on thin ice. We offer ourselves, our histories of denial, excessive control, self-obsession, pain and crucifixion and, most importantly, our resurrection.

Through 12-step addiction recovery, we get a unique chance to witness our small acts of surrender be met with God's mercy for us. When these two forces meet, spiritual growth takes place. Saint Augustine summarized this by suggesting we, "Pray as if everything depended on God; work as if everything depended on us." God moves mountains, but He asks us to pick up the shovel.

The Church recognizes the Second Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday. This day concludes what is known as the Easter Octave and calls us to rejoice in the merciful love of God as it is revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Gospel Reading this Sunday testifies to the peace that Jesus brings to our lives, overcoming fear and uncertainty:

*On the evening of that first day of the week,
when the doors were locked,
where the disciples were,
for fear of the Jews,
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.
The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.
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,
and whose sins you retain are retained."*

After Jesus's Crucifixion, his disciples were hiding out hoping they wouldn't be next. When Christ arrives, he simply offers a word of peace, shows the wounds of his death, and reminds them that they are to be sent out into the world. However, they will not be alone as the power of the Holy Spirit—which dwells in us today—will be their advocate.

We can find comfort in the support from others who have been in a similar situation and testify to the presence of God in their lives today. In a very Christian way, we gain trust when we're privileged to see the wounds of those in our fellowship. With the witness of others, we can align with the spirit of Divine Mercy and proclaim, "Jesus, I trust in you!"

Reflection Questions

- What is it like for you to share honestly and openly in a Christian recovery fellowship?
- How have others shown their wounds to you and how has it been helpful?
- What actions, prayers, devotions, spiritual routines, or practices strengthen your trust in God on a regular basis?

Last Call for Living the Steps

It's not too late to join the CIR community as we work through the Twelve Steps

- Gatherings begin April 1 and take place via Zoom on Mondays at 6:30p ET/3:30p PT for 22 weeks
- Integrate Catholic faith and the Twelve Steps using The Catholic in Recovery Workbook as a guide
- Small group breakouts based on addiction type and gender
- Registration closes on Monday, April 8
- Visit catholicinrecovery.com to learn more and register

Sunday Mass Readings

First Reading: Acts 4:32-35

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

Second Reading: 1 John 5:1-6

Gospel: John 20:19-31