

April 3, 2016 2nd Sunday of Easter
Divine Mercy Sunday

Blessed are those who believe and have not seen!

Acts 5:12-16

Psalms 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

Revelation 1:9-13, 17-19

John 20:19-31

Many signs and wonders were performed at the hands of the apostles. They often gathered together for prayer but no one dared join them. The people brought the sick and those troubled by unclean spirits and all were healed. Great numbers were added to the faithful as these signs were witnessed by many.

The Psalmist was hard pressed and falling but his prayers were heard and he was helped by the Lord. His strength and courage is the Lord, his savior. The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone and this was accomplished by the Lord and those who see this believe it is wonderful.

John proclaimed God's word and constantly gave testimony to Jesus. In a vision he heard a voice and saw one like the son of man. John fell at his feet but was touched and told not to be afraid. The voice said, "Once I was dead but now am alive. I hold the keys to death. I am the first and the last, the one who lives."

Jesus appeared to the disciples who were behind locked doors, fearing for their well being. He breathed upon them, and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit, whose sins you forgive are forgiven, whose sins you retain, are retained." Thomas was absent and refused to believe that the Lord appeared. A week later he was present when Jesus appeared again and this time he believed. Jesus said, "Blessed are those who believe and have not seen."



The Father sent
The Son who empowers the disciples
With the Holy Spirit.

Jesus made his presence unmistakably evident a second time and the faith of the disciples was again strengthened. The effect on Thomas was also clear; when he was away from the group he lost faith but when he was with the group and Jesus appeared, his faith did not fall short. Perhaps this is an important point for all of us in that our faith is also kept firm when we are in the company of good and just people and do not allow ourselves to be unduly influenced by the company of worldly people.

It was now clear to the disciples that Jesus' conviction of the coming of the Kingdom did not fade; that he clearly was the Messiah, fully empowered to lead them into that Kingdom. He assured them that all power had been given to him and he would continue to work with them and through them until the "Old Age" was replaced by a "New Age." They would receive in the time to come the touch of the Father through the Holy Spirit to guide others into the new reign of God.

In the many generations since Jesus left the earth consider the profound faith and inspiration exhibited by so many faithful who have put their faith in Jesus Christ, the Living Lord. Different aspects of diverse people have expressed themselves in various ways since, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23) and the creative mode expresses itself uniquely in each person.

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