

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

“Peace be with you.” These are the first words the Risen Lord spoke to his frightened disciples as they gathered behind locked doors. On this Second Sunday of Easter, also known as **Divine Mercy Sunday**, we find ourselves in that same upper room, encountering a God whose first response to our fear and doubt is not judgment, but peace.

In our Gospel today (John 20:19–31), we meet Thomas. Often labeled "the doubter," Thomas is perhaps better understood as a seeker of truth who needed a personal encounter with the Risen Christ. When Jesus appeared eight days later, he did not scold Thomas; instead, he invited him to touch his wounds. This is the heart of Divine Mercy: Christ does not hide his scars, but uses them to reveal his love and to heal ours. His glorified wounds remind us that our own suffering is not the end of the story. Easter does not erase the "Good Fridays" of our lives; it transforms them into signs of redemption.

As we reflect on the readings for this Sunday, we see a profound mystery of Easter: our healing does not come from pretending we are not broken. It comes from bringing our brokenness into the presence of the Risen Lord—and into the presence of one another. In the Acts of the Apostles, we see the early Church devoted to the "breaking of the bread" and communal life. This is the power of community. Through our shared prayers and our acts of mercy, we become the body of Christ for one another. Like Thomas, we often find the Risen Lord most clearly when we are gathered together as a community. We are healed by the community of faith when we allow others to carry our burdens, and when we, in turn, offer peace to someone else who is struggling.

As we move forward in this Easter season, I invite you to look at those sitting in the pews around you, or those you haven't seen in a while, and recognize them as partners in your healing. May we be a community that, like the first disciples, moving from fears to joy, from hurt to healing, and from doubts to exclaim with Thomas, ***“My Lord and my God!”***.

May the peace of the Risen Christ be with you and your families today and always!

Fr. Luke