

1-2-2022

## Second Sunday of Easter / Divine Mercy Sunday - 24 April 2022

Joe Tedesco

Follow this and additional works at: <https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/pastoral-liturgy>



Part of the [Catholic Studies Commons](#), and the [Liturgy and Worship Commons](#)

### Recommended Citation

Tedesco, Joe. "Second Sunday of Easter / Divine Mercy Sunday - 24 April 2022." *Pastoral Liturgy* 52, no. 2 (2021): 1-7.  
<https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/pastoral-liturgy/vol52/iss2/20>

This Liturgical Resource is brought to you by ResearchOnline@ND. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pastoral Liturgy by an authorized administrator of ResearchOnline@ND. For more information, please contact [researchonline@nd.edu.au](mailto:researchonline@nd.edu.au).





**24 April 2022**

**Second Sunday of Easter  
Divine Mercy Sunday**

Reflection by Joe Tedesco

## **Introduction**

The readings from the Second Sunday of Easter feature a common theme: together, gathered and connected to each other the followers of Jesus begin to experience the risen Christ and to also make Christ present to the world. The reading from Revelation presents an overarching foundation for such a calling; Christ is the beginning and the end of all existence and Christ holds the keys to death. It no longer is something which binds us, mercy is offered to all.

## **Penitential Act**

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you rose from the dead that we might have life.  
Lord, have mercy.

You show us the glory of the Father.  
Christ, have mercy.

You breathe new life into the world.  
Lord, have mercy.

## **Collect**

*The oration*

God of everlasting mercy,  
who in the very recurrence of the paschal feast  
kindle the faith of the people you have made your own,  
increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed,  
that all may grasp and rightly understand  
in what font they have been washed,  
by whose Spirit they have been reborn,  
by whose Blood they have been redeemed.

### *Commentary*

This ancient prayer is brought into the Roman missal from the related liturgical families of the gallican regions. It places the worshipper in the recurring Easter cycle of festivities rather than 'in the day' of the previous Sunday. It is replete with baptismal inferences, allowing the oration to address directly the newly baptised as well as rekindle the faith of long-standing believers. In English the prayer closes with a strong rhetorical flourish. It petitions the merciful one that the faithful may be right minded about the power of the resurrection. This is followed by three key metaphors of salvation. The image of being washed clean from sin is followed by one of rebirth in the Spirit, both immediately related to baptism. Redemption by the blood of Christ relates biblically to the sacrifice of Isaac as well as the passing of the angel of death over the blooded doorposts of the enslaved Israelites on that first Passover night (Ex 12:21-32). Both themes are present in the readings of the Easter vigil. In a form of liturgical serendipity, the entire prayer is based upon faith in the everlasting mercy of God, and so forms a bridge with the recent secondary affirmation of the day as also the Sunday for the celebration of a Christological interpretation of divine Mercy.

## **First Reading**

### **Acts 5:12–16**

The power of the risen Christ continues to be experienced in his followers. Together they provide teaching, care, and healing to all in need. The mercy of God is flowing and will continue to do so in the life of the Church.

## **Responsorial Psalm**

### **Psalm 118(117):2–4, 13–15, 22–24**

*Give thanks for the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.* (v. 1)

The Psalm used on the First Sunday of Easter is returned to again today; It proclaims joyously the endless love of God that is the light of our lives.

## **Second Reading**

### **Revelation 1:9–11a, 12–13, 17–19**

John speaks as an intimate brother to his fellow Christians. He speaks of Christ who has conquered death.

## **Gospel Reading**

### **John 20:19–31**

The risen Christ comes and stands among the disciples, offers them peace, and sends them as Christ himself was sent by the Father. Thomas is not present for this encounter and proclaims that he will only believe if he himself can touch Jesus.

## Reflection

The Second Sunday of Easter features the same Gospel Reading regardless of what year cycle we happen to be in. The account taken from John's Gospel features Thomas' encounter with Jesus and is a relatively well-known story – at least a certain feature of the story is well known. The common saying 'doubting Thomas' is of course founded on the encounter between Thomas, one of the Twelve, and his fellow disciples and then, with Christ. The striking words of Jesus to physically touch his wounds is arresting and certainly adds to the narrative's ability to stick in the memory of listeners. This intense encounter is functional on two levels.

Firstly, it attests to the physical nature of the resurrection; that Christ is actually risen, not simply some ghostly image. This is so despite the fact that, according to John's account, Jesus came in and stood among them even though the doors were closed. It is a profound juxtaposition placed by John; making the point that Jesus "came in" while there was no way to get in, something that seems physically impossible. At the same time, the Christ and his wounds are really present, he is seen, heard and invites Thomas to touch him too. It is unlikely this is acting as a 'proof' that Christ is risen in the narrow sense of the term. Rather, it is premising that an encounter with Christ is not dependent on limitations that we might perceive. Like much of the John's Gospel, it is asking us to see in a certain way, with eyes of faith. This, as we will see, is not a simplistic 'blind faith', a deadening of the mind. Rather, it is the opposite, it is an opening up to possibilities, an attentiveness to what has gone before and what is in our midst.

This brings us to the second dimension that comes through Christ's words to Thomas. Jesus responds directly to Thomas' conditions of believing, however, on encountering Jesus, Thomas' demands fade. He never actually touches Jesus' wounds yet comes to a profound moment of faith.

Expanding on this a touch, we can start by noting that 'doubting Thomas' is a poor moniker. After all, as just stated, Thomas finally does believe, offering the most profound statements of faith only found in this Gospel – a powerful affirming statement of discrete recognition of Jesus' divinity. So, Thomas is not really doubting Thomas but rather, 'doubting then believing Thomas'. It is unlikely that would ever catch on and supplant the truncated and popular form, but that is the truth of the matter.

Moreover, the title of 'doubting Thomas' does not actually reflect Thomas' original state. Thomas does not doubt as such. Rather, Thomas 'refuses to believe'. Are they the same thing? They are close, but there is an important difference.

Thomas refuses to believe the testimony of his fellow disciples. He has walked with Jesus, as have they. Moments of doubt have abounded throughout the Gospel narratives. We saw in last week's Gospel reading the resurrection itself begins with doubt and confusion in Mary of Magdala. This is another one of those moments but has a particular twist. Thomas doubts but adds a layer to his hesitation to believe. It is an active rejection of what is being said and witnessed. Further, the criteria that needs to be met to change this rejection is entirely Thomas'. His conditions need to

be met and it is closing him off to the evidence before him – that is, the disciples themselves and their joyous experience (cf. Jn 20:20).

Of course, as we hear, Jesus does appear and responds directly to Thomas' conditions. However, Thomas never actually enacts his conditions of belief. He too, like the others before him, encounters the risen Christ and believes. Then the important disclaimer, that the truly blessed and happy are those who do not see yet believe. There is an important caveat to this statement that can be easily missed. Blessed are they who do not see, yet they are not called to believe entirely without evidence. We have seen before in John's Gospel that there is a difference between being blind (not able to see) and seeing with eyes of faith. The story of the healing of the blind man in chapter 9 is a prominent example (especially vv. 35-41). So, Jesus is not saying blessed are those who do not perceive at all but, rather, those who are able to see in a particular way.

Returning to the Gospel reading today, and to put it simply, John is saying blessed are they who will be open to the possibility that this testimony offers. That there is a profound joy to be found in hearing the proclamation from Mary of Magdala and the other disciples mentioned today in this reading as well as the testimony of those found in the rest of the Scripture and, through that, come to believe.

However, what this joyous faith is based on extends further still to those who have continued to embody Christ and proclaim good news in word and deed through the ages. This image of the embodiment of Christ's saving activity found in the first reading in particular points to this. Thus, the living Church, the Body of Christ as the 'people of God' also offers us the means to move from doubt to faith.

Despite the simplistic inference that might be gathered from today's Gospel reading, we are not called to 'blind faith'. Rather, we are called to listen to the testimony of our Scriptures, ponder the lives of those who have gone before and be open to the experience of Christ found in those around us. Doubt comes, it is part of the journey of faith. The Gospel points to reality that we cannot see as Thomas was able to, but we can listen to the truth found in their encounter as well as to the joy found in the many men and women who have come to experience Christ in their own way through the journey. Importantly, we can also continue to gather as those first followers did, trusting that we too will encounter the living Christ among us.

# Prayer of the Faithful

## Introduction

As people of faith, we come with our needs in the complete belief that they will be answered according to God's will.

## Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis and all the leaders of our Church; lay, clergy and religious. May their faith and belief in the gospel continue to hold them as beacons for the People of God and for the world.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the members of the Plenary Council and the committees who support this important work of the Church in Australia. May they be filled with courage and joy in the journey towards a better, Christ-centred community.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of the world that they will encourage those of faith by protecting the rights of all who believe and practise religious life.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who are burdened and suffering due to the pandemic or climate change. May they find support in the community around them and in just policies from their leaders.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who build our environment in cities and towns. May they always take into consideration the needs of our earth and the needs of the people so that they can live in a sustainable and equitable way.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who are ill and for all the frontline health workers who support them. May they all be given the strength and care that is necessary for healing and full recovery.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

## Conclusion

Although Thomas originally did not believe what the disciples said, he came to believe profoundly in the nature of the Risen Christ. In that belief we offer these prayers and those only in our hearts through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

## Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

### GA

Be not afraid. B Dufford SJ. 449  
Church of God. P Stotter/ M Daly. 480  
Easter glory fills the sky. J Quinn SJ/ J Jones. 366  
Eye has not seen. M Haugen. 466  
Glory and praise to our God. D Schutte. 417  
God with hidden majesty. St Thomas Aquinas/ Gregorian Chant. 388  
Love is his word. L Connaughton/ A Milner. 462  
O sons and daughters. J M Neale/ Gregorian Chant. 359  
Sing to the mountains. B Dufford SJ. 362  
Take and eat. J Quinn SJ/ M Joncas. 198  
The Spirit of God. L Deiss. 185  
We remember. M Haugen. 446  
We walk by faith. M Haugen. 447

### AOV1

Be not afraid. B Dufford SJ. 114  
Eye has not seen. M Haugen. 146  
Glory and praise to our God. D Schutte. 16  
In the breaking of the bread. B. Hurd. 58  
Sing to the mountains. B Dufford SJ. 92  
We remember. M Haugen. 81  
We walk by faith. M Haugen. 63

### AOV4Kids

Sing Alleluia. S E Page. 76  
Easter people. D Light. 88

### AOVNG

The peace of the Lord. Judy Bailey. 129

### CWB

Bread of the world in mercy broken. Reginald Heber. 631  
Godhead here in hiding, whom I do adore. Tr. Gerard Manley Hopkins. 696  
O Father, I know I can count on your mercy. Kathleen Boschetti MSC. 762  
O sons and daughters. Jean Tisserand, tr. John Mason Neale. 778  
Peace I leave with you. Gregory Norbet OSB. 785

### CWBII

#### *Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions*

Godhead here in hiding. Attr. St Thomas Aquinas, tr. Gerard Manly Hopkins. 162  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! O sons and daughters, let us sing. Jean Tisserand, tr. John Mason Neale. 349  
That Easter day with joy was bright. Tr. John Mason Neale. 366  
Thine be the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son. Edmond Louis Budry, tr. Richard Birch Holye. 368  
We walk by faith. Henry Alford. 641

*Additional selections by Chris deSilva*

A trusting psalm. Kevin Bates. 293

My peace be upon you for ever, The Grail (England)/Christopher Willcock SJ. 558

My soul is longing for your peace. Lucien Deiss, CSSp. 559

Peace with the Father. James Quinn SJ. 591

**S&S1**

Thank God for he is good. Jeffrey Roscoe. 80

**S&S2**

Give thanks to the Lord. Steve Angrisano/Brian Green. 276

**Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy**

Psalm 117: *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his love is everlasting./Alleluia.*

Psalm 117: Kathleen Boschetti MSC. CWB 298 (stanzas 1, 4, 5)

Psalm 118 (117): Jenny O'Brien. JOBC pg. 40

Give thanks to the Lord: Marty Haugen. LPC pg. 54

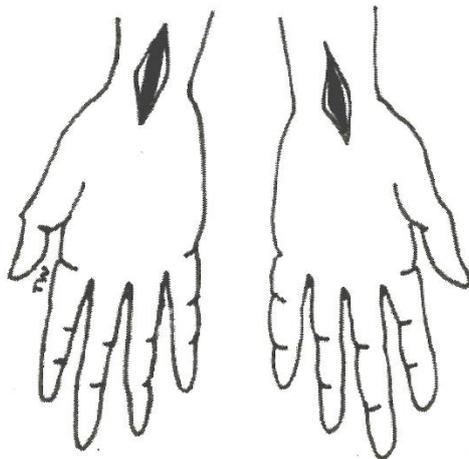
**Music selections by Michael Mangan**

Easter alleluia (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]

This is the day (FWS) *Based on Ps 117/118* [Gathering, Recessional]

This is the day that the Lord has made (LCC) *Ps 117 (118)* Children's Lectionary translation

Hearts on fire (Vs 2 & 3) (SHOF) [Recessional]



*Happy are those  
who have not seen  
yet believe.*