

*A Missionary Commentary
on the Sunday Readings*

Sunday Readings

Acts 4:32-35

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

1 John 5:1-6

John 20:19-31

[USCCB link to the Readings](#)

I Send You

The resurrection of Jesus is disorienting. The Church, in her mercy, gives us 50 days to integrate the meaning of the resurrection into our minds, our hearts, our very souls.

We are sent. The first reading paints a picture of the early Christian community living together as one heart and one mind focused on witnessing to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. We are sent to be witnesses. Witnesses of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

We are sent. The power of our witness comes from the Holy Spirit, that Jesus and the Father gives to us, and our faith. Our faith gives us the power to overcome, to transform, a wounded world seeking love, success, security, and peace in all the wrong places.

We are sent. We have the power to forgive, and to retain, sin. Today the Church celebrates Divine Mercy Sunday. We lead with mercy. God wants people to see their sin, receive his infinite mercy, and change their lives so they, in turn, can witness to God's mercy. We are witnesses to God's reign of love, salvation and justice which means we know what hate, oppression, and injustice looks like.

We are sent. In some ways, the first person the disciples are sent to in today's Gospel is Thomas. He was not there that evening. The disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." He would not believe them. There could be many reasons why Thomas was so stubborn. Perhaps it was just his personality – he needed to see to believe. His own pain could have hardened his heart. Regardless, the disciples kept him with them. They did not abandon Thomas. They may not have convinced Thomas, but they accompanied him until the Lord, himself, could reveal his wounded and resurrected body to Thomas.

We are sent together. The challenge facing every community of faith, the people we gather with on a regular basis to celebrate the Eucharist, is being of one heart and one mind in how we witness to the wounded and resurrected Christ. Jesus has breathed on us. It is now our job to "receive the Holy Spirit" and go forth, into the world, to be Divine Mercy.

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Notes on the Sunday Readings

First Reading

We get a glimpse of the pristine faith community in Acts 4: 32-35 – unity of heart and mind, a mutual sharing of resources, everyone’s needs were met, and the work of witnessing to “the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.”

Psalm

We sing of God’s mercy that “endures forever,” giving us strength and courage to embrace this day that “the Lord has made” with gladness and rejoicing. (Psalm 118)

Second Reading

Saint John, in his first letter, reminds us of the centrality of our faith – “Who indeed is the victor over the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:1-6)

Gospel

There is a lot in today’s Gospel from Saint John. It is Easter evening. The disciples are scared, hiding behind locked doors. Jesus just “came and stood in their midst.” He greets them with peace showing them his wounds. The disciples rejoice. Then, their wounded and risen Lord, again gives them peace, sends them just as the Father sent him, gives them the Holy Spirit by breathing on them, and gives them the authority to forgive, and retain, sin. Then, the following week, Jesus returns, again in peace, but this time addressing Thomas who doubted the witness of the disciples to the resurrection of Jesus. (John 20-19-31)

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