

## Missionary Commentary

Second Sunday of Easter, Year C  
Sunday of Divine Mercy  
April 27, 2025

## Sunday Readings

Acts: 5:12-16  
Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24  
Revelation 1:9-13, 17-19  
John 20:19-31  
[USCCB Link to the Readings](#)

## God's Mercy and Saints

Today, the Second Sunday of Easter, is popularly known as “Divine Mercy Sunday.” Our first reading narrates how the early Church practiced this virtue. Pope Francis, popularly known as the “pope of mercy,” asserted: “Mercy is the very foundation of the Church’s life. All of her pastoral activity should be caught up in the tenderness she makes present to believers” (MV 11). Wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy” (MV 12).

We can get helpful insights into mercy by examining the lives of some saints. You may ask: who is a saint? I like the description of the small boy who, while visiting a cathedral and seeing the illuminated figures in the stained glass windows, said: “Saints are people through whom the light shines.” Saints sought to radiate Jesus’ merciful love; some few examples follow.

**Bakhita: Slave, Sister, and Saint.** Josephine Bakhita (1868-1947), born in Sudan, was kidnapped as a child and sold five times as a slave. Once, when she tried to escape, she was forced to endure an extensive, painful tattooing. As Bakhita narrates, the process included “cuts on my breasts” and “some 60 cuts on the stomach and another 40 on the right arm.... Even as a slave, I never despaired, because I felt in me a mysterious force which sustained me.” Bakhita mercifully forgave her persecutors, becoming a Canossian sister; she was canonized by Pope John Paul II on October 1, 2000.

**Pope John XXIII.** Canonized on April 27, 2014, John possessed a cheerful, affectionate nature. He was an optimist and communicated this spirit to the Church—particularly through the Second Vatican Council. He retained his good humor in spite of many very difficult assignments (Bulgaria, Turkey, and Greece); he did not complain but chose to seize the moment and emphasize the potential good to be accomplished (e.g. saving countless Jews from the Nazis). He visited Rome’s children’s hospital on his first Christmas as pope; the following day he went to *Regina Coeli* prison. John XXIII’s optimism, joy, and mercy were infectious—and in the power of the Spirit, they helped renew the Church through Vatican II.

**Maximilian Kolbe.** Maximilian endured the extreme horrors of Auschwitz, the notorious Nazi concentration camp in Poland. His final act of Christian witness came on July 30, 1941. When Franciszek Gajowniczek was randomly chosen to die by starvation, he cried out: “My poor wife and children! I will never see them again.” Father Kolbe volunteered to take his place. Asked by the commandant who he was, Kolbe replied: “I am a Catholic priest.” Kolbe’s offer was accepted. Franciszek survived and lived to be 95 years old. When Pope John Paul II

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canonized Kolbe on October 10, 1982 in Saint Peter's Square, Franciszek, along with other Auschwitz survivors, was present (as was this writer).

**Great Cloud of Witnesses.** Catholics believe in the “communion of saints.” Some other “saints of mercy” are: *Peter Claver* (apostle to slaves); *Catherine of Siena* (buries the dead during the plague); *Martin of Tours* (gives half his cloak to a beggar); *Dorothy Day* (serves the outcasts in NYC); *Oscar Romero* (seeks justice for the poor); *Maria Goretti* (forgives her assailant). Each one of us is called to be a living “saint of mercy”!

## Notes on the Sunday Readings

### First Reading — Acts 5:12-16

On the Sundays after Easter, we read in the Acts of the Apostles about the impact of the risen Lord on the disciples of the early Christian community. Today's reading mentions the positive effects that their witness and deeds of mercy had upon many people.

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

This psalm is a kind of “chant of victory” that celebrates the Lord's resurrection, frequently proclaiming that the “Lord is good” and “His mercy endures forever.”

### Second Reading — Revelation 1:9-13, 17-19

The Book of Revelation is highly symbolic. Here John gives us a vision of the risen, eternal Christ among the seven lampstands, symbolic of the seven early churches. Christ the “risen lamp” remains with us, assisting us in times of trial.

### Gospel — John 20:19-31

In today's Gospel John gives us several important lessons. The risen Jesus appears and commissions his disciples to go out and proclaim the forgiveness of sins. Later, the Lord shows mercy to the doubting Thomas making him a believer. The final section states the purpose for the writing of the Gospel: coming to faith and possessing fullness of life.

*Notes and Commentary by Maryknoller James H. Kroeger, who recently published [Walking with Pope Francis: The Official Documents in Everyday Language](#) (Orbis Books – 2023) and [Exploring Vatican II Treasures: Actors, Events, Insights](#), commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the close of Vatican II [1965-2025] (Faith Alive Books – 2024).*

Please pray for the missions,  
and the repose of the soul of Pope Francis.  
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