

“Peace be with you.
As the Father has sent me,
so I send you.”
- John 20:21

Second Week of Easter: May 1 - 7, 2011

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Second Week of Easter

On the **Second Sunday of Easter**, as we celebrate **Divine Mercy Sunday**, we get a picture of how the early community gathered around as “Many signs and wonders were done among the people at the hands of the apostles.” **John's Gospel** gives us two post-resurrection stories that feature Thomas, the doubting apostle. “Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

The **Acts of the Apostles** all this week offers us the challenges the apostles faced from the earliest communities and from the Jewish authorities.

For the remaining five weeks of the Easter season, our readings will be from the **Acts of the Apostles** and from **John's Gospel**, with stories of Jesus' ministry not heard during the Ordinary Time of the liturgical year.

The weekday readings begin with the frightened Pharisee, Nicodemus, coming at night to speak to Jesus, asking how anyone can be “born again.” Jesus says we must be born of water and Spirit. The gospel offers a poetic look at light and darkness, good and evil: “the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light...But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.” John writes, “For the one whom God sent speaks the words of God.” After Jesus' disciples tell him to send 5,000 people away, he shows them how to feed them all. He walks across the sea to meet his apostles in their boat, saying, “It is I. Do not be afraid.”

John's Gospel brings us a wonderful story for the **Third Sunday of Easter**. After the events of Good Friday and the joy of Easter Sunday, Peter

Daily Prayer This Week

This is a wonderful week to pray in joy at God's merciful love for us, and for the unending forgiveness we are offered. We know we have done nothing to deserve that forgiveness and that we cannot earn it, and yet it is ours, if only we can accept it.

Over and over this week, we are invited to place our trust in God. The ever-human disciples didn't always put aside their fears, and neither do we. We can imagine the terrified followers of Jesus hiding behind locked doors until he appears in their midst, inviting them not to be afraid.

This might be a good week to spend time with Jesus looking at the fears in our own lives which keep us locked up away from others. We can ask Jesus for the courage to trust in him. What would it cost us to let go of the fears that smother our lives? What would it mean for our lives and for the relationships in our lives if we were willing to let go of “the way we have always done things” and to beg Jesus for help? Our lives can change. We have a standing offer from our Lord to fall into his forgiving embrace.

Dear Lord, it feels impossible to believe that my life can change, that I can move out of this rut I am in. I know I don't always live my life feeling your love and being my best self. Help me to trust in you, to drop my defenses and to feel how deeply I am loved and forgiven by you. Give me the courage to feel it in my heart when you say, “Don't be afraid” and “Peace be with you.” I so long for that peace in my life but it feels so far away

longs to return to his old life. "I am going fishing," he says. In a scene reminiscent of the original call of Peter, Jesus appears to the group after a futile night of fishing but is unrecognized by his followers. He calls out to Peter in the boat and tells him where to drop his fishing nets. The fish overflow the nets and they suddenly recognize him: "It is the Lord!" Jesus cooks them breakfast and asks Peter three times if he loves him. Peter, puzzled, affirms three times that he loves Jesus - just as he denied him three times during the Passion. "Feed my sheep," Jesus says to him.

sometimes. Help me to believe in you, to drive away the doubts and unbelief that harden my heart.

I know my life can change, if only I can say with all my heart, "I trust in you, Lord. I believe in your mercy and I know that with your help, my life can be healed."

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