

Commentary on the Readings for April 16, 2023

The Second Sunday of Easter also Divine Mercy Sunday

The theme of the readings for this, the first Sunday after Easter, continues to reflect the joy of Easter as it should. We too should not let that joy fade from our lives so easily. It is something to be nourished through prayer and meditation. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the central theme and event of all Christianity; and the more we understand it, the more meaningful our life here on earth will be to us and to others. Just listen to the readings and see how they tune into this concept.

In the **First Reading**, from the ***Acts of the Apostles (2:42-47)***, we read where all the followers of Jesus, not just the apostles, were so enthusiastic about this "new way" of life that they lived in communities in order to share everything, both material and spiritual. This way, they could help in nourishing and sharing their newly found spiritual life in Christ with each other. Because of this joy, many others came to believe and "the Lord added to their number."

The **Responsorial Psalm (118:1-23)**, is a continuation of the same psalm from Easter Sunday. It is an important liturgical poem sung at the Jewish Seder or Passover Meal. It recalls how the Israelites implored the God of Israel for help during a time of suffering and how God came to their rescue. The Psalmist then goes on to offer praises of thanksgiving acknowledging God's benevolence.

The **Second Reading** is from the ***First Letter of St. Peter (1:3-9)***. This portion of Peter's letter is a brief summary of the Christian life then and now. We should not think of Christ's Resurrection as something that happened 2000 plus years ago, but rather, as something that happens daily in every Mass— not just those we attend, but all Masses. They are the greatest prayers of Thanksgiving that one could offer for this sublime act of love.

The **Gospel Reading** is from the ***Gospel of John (20:19-31)***. Place yourself into this scene: It is the night of the Resurrection and Jesus appears in all His divine Glory before the apostles. Can you image the joy after the shock subsides? They must have been bouncing all over the room. Then Thomas, who was not present at the first appearance of Jesus, throws cold water on that event by his refusing to believe that Christ was resurrected. It takes another appearance of Christ to convince Thomas who then utters that great phrase of humility, "*My Lord and my God!*"

Are you somewhat like Thomas, having a difficult time in believing? To doubt, as Thomas did, is not wrong or sinful. However, to leave it there and do nothing about it is wrong. Sometimes God puts doubts in our head in order for us to get moving toward finding the truth, through prayer or study or both. Something to think about during your prayer time this week! **MFB**