

Commentary on the Readings for April 7, 2024

The Second Sunday of Easter, Sunday of Divine Mercy

The Sunday after Easter continues to reflect the joy of Easter as it should, and we should not let it fade from our daily lives so easily. It is something to be nourished through prayer and meditation. The Death and 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 ourselves and to others. Just listen to the readings and see how they tune into this concept.

The **First Reading** is from the ***Acts of the Apostles (4:32-35)***. In this passage we read that 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 newfound 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 (118:2-24)** 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 to save them from slavery to the Egyptians 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 John (5:1-6)***. This is a brief summary of the Christian life then and now. We should not think of Christ's Resurrection as something that happened 2000 years ago. Rather, we should be thinking about it on a daily basis as something that God does for us in every Mass that is offered on our behalf--not just those we attend, but all Masses. They are the greatest prayers of thanksgiving that one could offer for this sublime act of divine love.

The **Gospel Reading** is from the ***Gospel of John (20:19-31)***. Put yourself in this scene. It is the night of the Resurrection and Jesus appears in all His divine Glory before the apostles. Can you imagine the joy after the shock subsides? The apostles must have been bouncing all over the room. Then later, Thomas, who wasn't there, throws cold water on that first event when he learns about it by refusing to believe. It takes another appearance of Jesus to convince Thomas who then utters that great phrase of humility, *"My Lord and my God!"*

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 into our head in order for us to get moving toward finding the truth through prayer or study or both. So we need to ask ourselves: are we sometimes like Thomas, having a difficult time in believing? If so, then what are we going to do about it? Do not let doubts rob you of the joy that God wants all of us to have. Something to think about during your prayer time this week.

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