



**Blessed Sacrament Parish**  
**Homily by Father Chris Comerford**  
**April 28, 2019 The Second Sunday of Easter**

**Reading I Acts 5:12-16**

**Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-Psalm 119:2**

**Reading II Revelations 1:9-19**

**Gospel John 20:19-31**

**Homily**

By this time, Jesus's disciples have seen him executed by dying on the cross and they thought they were next. They really did. They thought they were next so they would keep the doors locked and all of a sudden Jesus is there on Easter Sunday night. They had heard the stories about the tomb being empty and visions of angels. Mary Magdalene had even seen an appearance of Jesus. So many things. All these stories. But they still weren't sure, and then Jesus was right in front of them in the locked room.

And of course he had very strong words for them. Remember, this is the first time he had seen them after the resurrection. The word "apostle" means, "to be sent out." And he is going to equip them to fulfill their mission. He breaths on them and promises them the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit will give them what they need—as our eight graders know from receiving the Holy Spirit at confirmation. Then he also equips them to show mercy: whose sins you forgive are forgiven; the sins you retain are retained. The power of the sacrament of reconciliation is passed on to the apostles, to their successors and down to the priests today to be able to offer the mercy and forgiveness of God. An incredible gift.

Clearly Jesus wants that act of mercy to continue in the world. He often forgave sinners. even when he saw people suffering physically he was concerned about what was in their heart. Jesus knows our hearts and that we need to heal.

Then we hear about Thomas. Oh, we like to judge him, don't we. He is probably the most judged of the apostles. We even gave him a name: doubting Thomas. That is so unfair. How many of you if you had not been in that room, and came back and the apostles told you they had seen Jesus alive—how many of you would believe them? Well, probably not me. I would say, "Oh, sure. Sure you saw him." We would be justified to doubt. It would be tough to believe. I wonder where Thomas was, first of all, but for some reason he wasn't there. We would be just like him. We want proof. "I want to put my hands in the nail prints on his hands, and in the wound in his side."

Then a week later, Thomas gets that very opportunity. You know what is interesting? It does not say that he puts in hand in the nail-wounds and the wound in his side. But what does Thomas say showing his great act of faith. "My Lord and my God." That is what we

should remember about Thomas. He fully embraces who Jesus is—Lord and God. We can't say anymore or state it any better than that. I have told you before but will tell you again, every time the priest raises the host and the chalice, and every time I take communion, even when I was very little, I say "My Lord and my God" to myself. I still do. Every time I elevate I say, "My Lord and my God." It allows me an act of faith and to believe in my God who has become present in front of me. It is a great thing to do. It is incredible what Thomas teaches us.

Jesus then says, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." That's us. Blessed because we have not seen Jesus's physical body, but we still believe. Jesus wants us to believe and trust in him. About the early part of the last century, Jesus appeared quite a few times to a Polish, cloistered nun. Her name is St. Faustina Kowalska. He wanted the message of the Divine Mercy to be spread to the world. First, he wanted an image to be painted. It actually took 13 or 14 times for the artist to get it right. St. Faustina kept telling him what Jesus would want—and this is the image. In it we see the rays of light coming from the heart of Jesus like the blood and water that flowed from his heart while he was on the cross pouring his mercy onto the world. And then the words, "Jesus, I trust in you." This is an incredible gift to the world.

But Jesus wasn't done. He asked St. Faustina to proclaim to the world that the Sunday after Easter would be declared the Divine Mercy Sunday. Well, how in the world is a cloistered Polish nun going to spread to the whole world to have this feast proclaimed. It can't happen! But it did. How did it happen? It just so happened that a young Polish man would go pray at the church where St. Faustina was living and go pray there sometimes. That man's name was Karol Wojtyla. I hope that name is familiar to you. The way the Divine Mercy was spread to the world was by this Polish Pope who became a saint. St. John Paul II who knew of St. Faustina, he knew about the image and painting, and he knew the Divine Mercy. So in the year 2000, on a Sunday after Easter, Pope John Paul II canonized Faustina Kowalska as a saint and declared that the second Sunday of Easter would be Divine Mercy Sunday for the universal church. We had never had a Polish pope. God works in amazing ways. The message of the Divine Mercy was one of the greatest events of the last century for our faith and for our church. It is an important devotion.

I encourage you to learn more about the Divine Mercy. Pray the Divine Mercy chaplet if you are struggling to forgive someone, and it is the most powerful weapon to use to forgive yourself, and when you need healing. It is an incredible gift. I have prayed the chaplet for many years and it is a powerful part of my own faith life. There are some brochures around that can show you how to pray the chaplet. Look upon the image. There are small prayer cards for you, and a few 8" by 10" copies of the photos. We need this Divine Mercy chaplet in our lives today and to learn to be merciful to others. It is the good news we hear today. Let's pray that we can open our hearts and be like Thomas who truly trusted in Jesus and called out—"My Lord and My God."

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*Father Christopher Comerford is pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Quincy, IL. (Third TASCAM Recorder DR 40 file 29)*