

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD

Second Sunday of Easter

✧ *Divine Mercy Sunday* ✧

This is a celebration of the Word to aid your worship this Sunday alone or with your household. If possible, place a simple cross or crucifix prominently in the room and light one or more candles. You can also place an image of the Virgin Mary there. Choose someone to lead the prayer and one or two people to do the readings.

Whoever leads the prayer can say:

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we are gathering here today as a domestic church, celebrating the grace of Easter on this Feast of Divine Mercy through prayer, reading of Sacred Scripture, and meditation on the example of your saints. Bless this time as we call to mind your continuing presence with us, and strengthen us in faith until we can gather once more in our parish and receive the sacraments we long for.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

After a moment of silence, let everyone begin by making the Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

HYMN

Choose an appropriate song.

We place ourselves before the Lord, beginning with an act of contrition, such as:

O my God,
I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee,
and I detest all my sins because of thy just punishments,
but most of all because they offend Thee, my God,
who art all good and deserving of all my love.
I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to sin no more
and to avoid the near occasion of sin.
Amen.

The following are the readings of the Second Sunday of Easter.

**A reading from
the Acts of the Apostles**

2:42-47

THE WHOLE COMMUNITY remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.

The many miracles and signs worked through the apostles made a deep impression on everyone.

The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed.

They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved.

The word of the Lord.

R Thanks be to God.

—————• **PSALM 117** •—————

R (1) Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
for his love has no end.

Or: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Let the sons of Israel say:

“His love has no end.”

Let the sons of Aaron say:

“His love has no end.”

Let those who fear the Lord say:

“His love has no end.” **R**

I was thrust down, thrust down and falling,
but the Lord was my helper.

The Lord is my strength and my song;
he was my saviour.

There are shouts of joy and victory
in the tents of the just. **R**

The stone which the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.

This is the work of the Lord,
a marvel in our eyes.

This day was made by the Lord;
we rejoice and are glad. **R**

A reading from
the first Letter of Saint Peter

1:3-9

BLESSED BE GOD the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy has given us a new birth as his sons, by raising Jesus Christ from the dead, so that we have a sure hope and the promise of an inheritance that can never be spoilt or soiled and never fade away, because it is being kept for you in the heavens. Through your faith, God’s power will guard you until the salvation which has been prepared is revealed at the end of time. This is a cause of great joy for you, even though you may for a short time have to bear being plagued by all sorts of trials; so that, when Jesus Christ is revealed, your faith will have been tested and proved like gold—only it is more precious than gold, which is corruptible even though it bears testing by fire—and then you will have praise and glory and honour. You did not see him, yet you love him; and still without seeing him, you are already filled with a joy so glorious that

it cannot be described, because you believe; and you are sure of the end to which your faith looks forward, that is, the salvation of your souls.

The word of the Lord.

✠ Thanks be to God.

Alleluia, alleluia! Jesus said: “You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.” **Alleluia!**

**A reading from
the holy Gospel according to John**

20:19-31

IN THE EVENING of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, “Peace be with you,” and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.” After saying this he breathed on them and said: “Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.”

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, “We have seen the Lord,” he answered, “Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.” Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, “Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.” Thomas replied, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him: “You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.”

There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Allow for a few minutes of silent reflection. The following passage could be read:

M E D I T A T I O N O F T H E D A Y

A Feast of Mercy

In the evening, when I was in my cell, I saw the Lord Jesus clothed in a white garment. One hand [was] raised in the gesture of blessing, the other was touching the garment at the breast. From beneath the garment, slightly drawn aside at the breast, there were emanating two large rays, one red, the other pale. In silence I kept my gaze fixed on the Lord; my soul was struck with awe, but also with great joy. After a while, Jesus said to me, “Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: Jesus, I trust in you. I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel, and [then] throughout the world. I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over [its] enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I myself will defend it as my own glory.”

When I told this to my confessor, I received this for a reply: "That refers to your soul." He told me, "Certainly, paint God's image in your soul." When I came out of the confessional, I again heard words such as these: "My image already is in your soul. I desire that there be a Feast of Mercy. I want this image, which you will paint with a brush, to be solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter; that Sunday is to be the Feast of Mercy. I desire that priests proclaim this great mercy of mine towards souls of sinners. Let the sinner not be afraid to approach me. The flames of mercy are burning me—clamouring to be spent; I want to pour them out upon these souls."

SAINT MARIA FAUSTINA KOWALSKA

Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska († 1938) was a Polish Sister of Our Lady of Mercy. She was canonised in 2000.

INTERCESSIONS

The leader can begin with these words:

Let us give thanks to the Lord for all his goodness. United in the joy of the Resurrection, let us turn to the Father with our prayers:

That, on this Divine Mercy Sunday, the Church will rededicate herself to living and proclaiming Christ's mercy. Lord, in your mercy,

R Hear our prayer.

That leaders of governments will work single-mindedly to keep their citizens safe from the corona virus, particularly key workers, medical staff, and those who are most vulnerable. Lord, in your mercy, *R*

That this challenging time may incite in many the generous desire to consecrate their lives to God, through the priesthood and religious life. Lord, in your mercy, *R*

For those who unable to access the Sacrament of Reconciliation at this time: may they know the depths of God's merciful forgiveness and obtain peace. Lord, in your mercy, *R*

For those carrying heavy burdens as they experience lockdown: that they may be filled with the truth and the light of the Risen Christ. Lord, in your mercy, *R*

For the grace this week to face the trials and difficulties daily life during the pandemic, with the confidence, patience, and hope that Christ's victory over death obtains for us. Lord, in your mercy, *R*

Personal intentions

Our Father....

The leader could offer some words of consolation at this moment, such as:

Lord Jesus, we offer ourselves to you, with all our worries and concerns. May we become instruments of your mercy for each other and all those whose lives we touch, even in isolation. Help us to find creative ways to use this difficult time for your glory, unpacking the grace of your Resurrection in every aspect of our lives. Make us the living stones of the Church in this difficult time, and when we are free once more to gather in our churches, may we be strengthened in faith, hope, and charity.

An Act of Spiritual Communion:

My Jesus,
I believe that you are present in this Holy Sacrament of the altar.
I love you above all things
and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
come spiritually into my soul
so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and for ever.
Amen.

May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and lead us to everlasting life. And may the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.

To conclude the celebration, you can sing or recite the following or another suitable hymn. Turn and face an image of Mary, if you have one.



***Regina cæli, lætare, alleluia,
quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia,
resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia;
ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.***

***(V) Gaude et lætare, Virgo Maria, alleluia.
R Quia surrexit Dominus vere, alleluia....)***

**Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia!
for he whom you were worthy to bear, alleluia!
has Risen as he said, alleluia!
Pray for us to God, alleluia!**

***(V) Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.
R For the Lord has truly Risen, alleluia....)***

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Divine Mercy

Léonie Caldecott

Editor-in-chief

Happy are the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them.

(Mt 5:7)

ON 22 FEBRUARY 1931, OUR LORD appeared to a Polish nun called Faustina Kowalska. In the vision, described in today's Meditation above, he told her of "my most tender mercy at the time when my agonising heart was opened by a lance on the Cross". He asked her to have an image of himself as he had first appeared to her painted, with the inscription: "Jesus, I trust in you." The Divine Mercy devotion is designed to help us truly access the newness of life that pours from the heart of the crucified Christ.

In the Universal Church, the devotion to Divine Mercy will always be associated as much with Saint John Paul II as it is with his compatriot, whom he canonised in the spring of 2000. A few weeks later, our Lord's request that the Sunday after Easter should be devoted to Divine Mercy was finally fulfilled, as the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments decreed that the feast should be kept throughout the world, as "a perennial invitation to the Christian world to face, with confidence in divine benevolence, the difficulties and trials that mankind will experience in the years to come".

It is as though the suffering pope knew, at the turn of the new millennium, how much the world would need this sign. When he died five years later, it was on the vigil of the feast itself. From the eloquent encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*, to his profound charity and understanding of human nature, Saint John Paul's life can be said to epitomise the principle at the heart of the devotion. Pope Francis too has made mercy the heart-beat of his pontificate, declaring a Jubilee Year of Mercy from December 2015 to November 2016. In this time of global pandemic, the need for mercy is all the more evident: both in the grace of divine forgiveness for our sins, and in our care for the physical and spiritual needs of others. For as Jesus said to Saint Faustina: "When a soul approaches Me with trust, I fill it with such an abundance of graces that it cannot contain them within itself, but radiates them to other souls."

■ DIVINE MERCY CHAPLET ■

This simple version of the Chaplet may be said using an ordinary rosary.

✦ Begin with the Sign of the Cross, followed by one *Our Father*, one *Hail Mary*, and *The Apostles Creed*.

✦ Then for each of the five decades,

On the *Our Father* beads say the following:

"Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of your dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world."

On the ten *Hail Mary* beads say the following:

"For the sake of his sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world."

✦ Conclude with, three times:

"Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world."