

Peace be with you.

As the Father has sent me, so I send you.

John 20:21

Second Week of Easter: April 15 - 21, 2012

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Second Week of Easter

On the **Second Sunday of Easter**, as we celebrate **Divine Mercy Sunday**, we get a picture into how the early community lived their life of faith by sharing everything in common. In John's Gospel, Jesus appears to the Apostles, hiding in fear, and gives them the gift of his Spirit, calling them to forgive sins. We are reminded that the gospel is written, that we might come to believe in our Lord and have life in his name.

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**, which offers 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." Jesus feeds the 5,000 people. Alone in a storm, the disciples are afraid -- but more fearful when Jesus walks across the water toward them. "It is I. Do not be afraid," Jesus tells them.

On the **Third Sunday of Easter**, Luke's

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

Gospel has the very human story of Jesus' appearing to the disciples after the Resurrection, inviting them to touch his hands and feet to see that he is real. He ate with them and "he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures."

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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