

Second Sunday of Easter (or Sunday of Divine Mercy)

April 12, 2026

Communal life.

Breaking of bread and prayers.

Sharing possessions.

-rvb.

Divine Mercy Sunday is a significant feast in the Catholic Church that invites the faithful to reflect on and receive God's mercy, fostering a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation within the community. It was established by Pope St. John Paul II during the canonization of St. Faustina Kowalska on April 30, 2000, and celebrated on the Second Sunday of Easter.

It is believed that the faith can receive complete forgiveness of sins and punishment if they go to confession and receive Holy Communion. This day is seen as an opportunity to experience God's mercy in a profound way. -Internet.

-----**also, speaking of Mercy, consider Mercy Corps**

Mercy Corps is calling on the international community to ensure humanitarian access is protected; civilians are shielded from harm, and frontline responders are resourced immediately. Mercy Corps is continuing to deliver lifesaving support across Sudan and in crisis zones across the globe.

"Today is a day to celebrate the power of love and compassion that connects us with our families, friends, and the people who make a difference in the world — like you.

As a member of our global community, you help us bring hope, prosperity, and possibility to communities around the world. We are so grateful to you.

As we share appreciation today, we invite you to join us in thanking our 4,300 humanitarian team members who work tirelessly to serve communities caught in conflict, disaster, and poverty. Ninety-five percent of our team members work in their home countries, often facing the same challenges as the people they support.

The latest IPC report findings confirm what our teams are witnessing on the ground: hunger is worsening across Sudan after three years of unrelenting conflict. An estimated 4.2 million cases of acute malnutrition have been reported in 2026, compared to 3.7 million in 2025. -Internet.

A Mercy Corps team member in South Kordofan describes the conditions for people forced from their homes by violence:

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"During the siege, the cities were cut off and there were severe shortages of food and essential goods. Medical supplies were not available, banks stopped functioning, and people had no cash to meet their basic needs. Hunger spread among families who remained. Some households depended on support from relatives outside the area, and in extreme cases people survived by eating leaves and wild plants. There were reported deaths among children and among people with chronic illnesses due to hunger and the lack of medicine." - Internet.

"The quality of mercy is not strained" is from Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice, spoken by Portia in Act 4, Scene 1. It means that mercy should be given freely and not forced; it is compared to gentle rain that blesses both the giver and the receiver. The quote emphasizes that true mercy is a powerful virtue that enhances the dignity of those who show it, making it more valuable than any crown or scepter."

"It is in Jesus that we live, move, and have our being." Acts 17:28

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Reading 1

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves
to the **teaching** of the apostles and to the **communal life**,
to the **breaking of bread** and to the **prayers**.

Awe came upon everyone,
and many **wonders and signs** were done through the apostles.
All who believed were together and **had all things in common**;
they would **sell their property and possessions**
and divide them among all according to each one's need.

Every day they devoted themselves
to meeting together in the temple area
and to breaking bread in their homes.

They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart,
praising God and enjoying favor with all the people.

And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.

In this reading from Acts, what unites the community are not their perceptions but their awareness of their oneness in faith. The community is lifted beyond the perceptions (which varied like the six men of Indostan – as explained in the Gospel reflection on the scriptures) to the inner soul world of faith which prompted Thomas to utter, “My Lord and my God.” In terms of context, it would be helpful to read this passage with Acts 4:32-35 and 5:12-16 which paint similar pictures of communal life in the early Christian community. The reading

is also the conclusion to chapter 2 and parallels the first thirteen verses of Pentecost – unity in diversity. What united them? They had a connection with the apostles; their “fellowship” indicated a united purpose. They shared prayers in common, gathered around the table to break bread and distributed food to the needy. Joy flowed forth out of their common faith life – Do not postpone joy. Rebbe Nachman praises the momentous virtue of joy – “Always remember, joy is not incidental to your spiritual quest. It is vital, so cultivate it.”

“They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people.”

Responsorial Psalm

[Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24](#)

R. (1) Give thanks to the LORD for he is good, his love is everlasting.

or:

R. Alleluia.

Let the house of Israel say,

“His mercy endures forever.”

Let the house of Aaron say,

“His mercy endures forever.”

Let those who fear the LORD say,

“His mercy endures forever.”

R. Give thanks to the LORD for he is good, his love is everlasting.

or:

R. Alleluia.

I was hard pressed and was falling,

but the LORD helped me.

My strength and my courage is the LORD,

and he has been my savior.

The joyful shout of victory
in the tents of the just:

R. Give thanks to the LORD for he is good, his love is everlasting.

or:

R. Alleluia.

The stone which the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.

By the LORD has this been done;
it is wonderful in our eyes.

This is the day the LORD has made;
let us be glad and rejoice in it.

R. Give thanks to the LORD for he is good, his love is everlasting.

or:

R. Alleluia.

Reading 2

[1 Peter 1:3-9](#)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading,
kept in heaven for you
who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith,
to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time.
In this you rejoice, although now for a little while
you may have to suffer through various trials,
so that the genuineness of your faith,
more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire,
may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor
at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Although you have not seen him you love him;
even though you do not see him now yet believe in him,
you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy,
as you attain the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

This reading from Peter moves us beyond perception to the ethereal realm of faith. “Faith is the touching of a mystery. It is to perceive another dimension to absolutely everything in the world. In faith, the mysterious meaning of life comes through...To speak in the simplest possible terms:

Faith sees, knows, and senses the presence of God in the world.” - Alexander Schmemmann, Orthodox priest. Faith knows the Son of God in the Upper Room.

Peter says, “Although you have never seen him, you love him, and without seeing you believe in him, and rejoice with inexpressible joy touched with glory because you are achieving faith’s goal, your salvation.” Peter lifts the community beyond perception to the waters of baptism, relating our “rebirth” through baptism to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is working within us and allows others to say, “Although you have never seen him, you love him...”

Alleluia

[John 20:29](#)

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

You believe in me, Thomas, because you have seen me, says the Lord; blessed are they who have not seen me, but still believe!

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

John 20:19-31

On the evening of that first day of the week,
when the doors were locked, where the disciples were,
for fear of the Jews,

Jesus came and stood in their midst
and said to them, **“Peace be with you.”**

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.

The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

Jesus said to them again, **“Peace be with you.**

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

And when he had said this, **he breathed on them and said to them,
“Receive the Holy Spirit.**

Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them,
and whose sins you retain are retained.”

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve,
was not with them when Jesus came.

So the other disciples said to him, “We have seen the Lord.”

But he said to them,

**“Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands
and put my finger into the nailmarks
and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”**

Now a week later his disciples were again inside
and Thomas was with them.

Jesus came, although the doors were locked,

and stood in their midst and said, **“Peace be with you.”**

**Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands,
and bring your hand and put it into my side,
and do not be unbelieving, but believe.”**

Thomas answered and said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

Jesus said to him, “Have you come to believe because you have seen me?

Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples
that are not written in this book.

But these are written that you may come to believe

that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,

and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.

Finally, those who were huddled together in the upper room with doors locked came to realize the elephant in the room. John Saxe drafted the following poem – six men of Indostan went to see an elephant although they were blind. The first one approached the elephant and fell against the broad and sturdy side and exclaimed, “Bless me! The elephant is like a wall!” The second one felt the tusk and stated, “I feel a round, smooth, and sharp object, tis very clear the elephant is like a spear.” The third person, holding the trunk said, “This elephant is very much like a snake!” The fourth one felt above the knee, “What a wondrous beast who is very much like the trunk of a tree.” The fifth person touched the side of the ear and said, “The marvel of this elephant is very like a fan.” Finally, the sixth person felt the swinging tail brush against his chest and quipped, “It felt like a rope.” These 6 men of Indostan disputed loud and long, each in his own opinion, though each was partly in the right, and all were in the wrong.

In the Gospel of John, the author highlights the teaching that some believe without seeing and they are blessed. They transcend or see through perception to the heart of the soul. At the same time, even

seeing does not guarantee the gift and dynamism of faith. Here faith comes by hearing the word of the risen Lord who addresses Thomas personally. May we not be blind to the way, the truth, and the life of who is Jesus. We may paint different portraits of Jesus, like the 6 men of Indostan, but in faith, we and they become part of a stained-glass window who is Jesus the Lord, and not simply the elephant in the room!

I wonder what Padre Pio (May 25, 1887 – September 23, 1968), an Italian friar of the Order of Friars, priest, stigmatist, and mystic thought, felt, and believed when homilizing about this gospel? He is venerated as a saint in the Catholic Church, and his feast day is celebrated on September 23. As Padre Pio, he was known throughout his life for numerous instances of supernatural phenomena, most notably [stigmata](#)—wounds like those of [Jesus Christ](#) at his [crucifixion](#)—on his hands and feet. He was an “Alter Christus” (an other Christ). Several investigations into the phenomena were conducted by the [Vatican](#); and although they led to temporary sanctions on his ministry, his reputation for sanctity continued to increase during his lifetime. “He was also renowned for other mystical phenomena, and many other forms of spiritual outreach to individuals. After his death, devotion to Padre Pio has continued to spread among

believers worldwide, and especially throughout the [Mezzogiorno](#). He was [beatified](#) on 2 May 1999 and [canonised](#) on 16 June 2002 by [Pope John Paul II](#). His [relics](#) are exposed in the [sanctuary of Saint Pio of Pietrelcina](#), next to the monastery of San Giovanni Rotondo, which is now a major pilgrimage site. His legacy also includes the [Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza](#) (*Home for the Relief of Suffering*), a [hospital](#) built near the monastery of San Giovanni Rotondo.” Internet.

"Go to the Madonna. Love her! Always say the Rosary. Say it well. Say it as often as you can! Be souls of prayer. Never tire of praying, it is what is essential. Prayer shakes the Heart of God, it obtains necessary graces!" ~ Padre Pio of Pietrelcina.

Final Prayer: God of life, your son, Jesus, speaks highly of those who have not seen yet have believed in Him. May our faith take us beyond the limits of perception into the world of the Spirit’s domain – faith proclaiming, “My Lord and my God.” Amen.

Roger J. Vanden Busch. Wishing you and your loved ones Easter blessings – health, happiness, and holiness.

