



2nd Sunday of Easter - Divine Mercy

Acts 5:12-16
Ps 118:1-4,13-15,22-24
Rev 1:9-13, 17-19
John 20:19-31

Monday April 12

Acts 4:23-31
Ps 2:1-9
John 3:1-8

Tuesday April 13

Acts 4:32-37
Ps 93:1-2,5
John 3:7-15

Wednesday April 14

Acts 5:17-26
Ps 34:2-9
John 3:16-21

Thursday April 15

Acts 5:27-33
Ps 34:2,9,17-20
John 3:31-36

Friday April 16

Acts 5:34-42
Ps 27:1,4,13-14
John 6:1-15

Saturday April 17

Acts 6:1-7
Ps 33:1-2,4-5,18-19
John 6:16-21

The Gospel reading sets the stage for Pentecost. Prior to giving us the gift of his Spirit, Jesus provides the gift of peace. A supernatural gift, it penetrates deep within and lasts even in the face of challenges and difficulties.

Jesus bestowed it upon his first apostle twice in the same meeting shortly after his resurrection. Then he gave them the life-breath of God, the Holy Spirit, and commissioned them with the priesthood of forgiving the sins of others – another gift that brings peace.

This gift of peace has been distributed by Jesus ever since, through the ordained priesthood, in what we now call the Sacrament of Reconciliation. And to hold us steady in our efforts to remain holy, Jesus still gives us the breath of God. This breath, this life-sustaining presence of God's Spirit, which created the world and

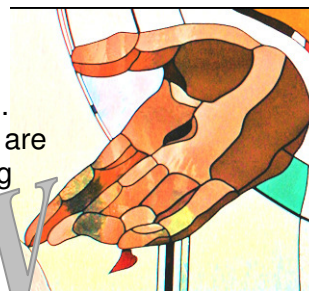
which keeps us spiritually alive, is the Holy Spirit – God's holiness activating us and dwelling within us.

Whatever is not holy – not of the Spirit – is sinful and destructive. Jesus, who is the embodiment of Divine Mercy, died on the cross and gave us his Spirit so that we could live in the forgiveness of God.

Whenever you pray the "Our Father", do it slowly and intentionally, and pay attention to these words: "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." Think of the people who have irritated you the most or who have continued to behave hurtfully with-

out remorse.

Whose sins are you retaining by your unwillingness to give



Your unforgiveness can affect their eternal souls as well as your own, because you're denying them an opportunity to see God's forgiveness in your example, and you're denying God the opportunity to forgive you for your sin of unforgiveness.

Forgiveness doesn't mean approving of the sin nor forgetting what was done. It means letting go of the desire to retaliate. It means choosing to love whether it's deserved or not. It means we enter anew into Christ's resurrection power, for it is in giving that we receive.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. Who in your life is hardest to forgive? Perhaps it's yourself! What sins are you retaining by refusing to accept that God has already made his forgiveness available through the cross and resurrection? What are you going to do this week to let go of the unforgiveness?
2. Name a situation that illustrates the resurrection power of forgiveness. How did the Holy Spirit help make forgiveness easier to do?
3. What changed when forgiveness was given? How did this bring the kingdom of God to earth?