

## Homily

Divine Mercy Sunday, The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter

April 11, 2021

A string happily walks into a fancy restaurant and approaches the host stand, “Table for one, please.” The host looks at the string with disgust, points to a sign on the wall and tells the string that there are no strings allowed. Dejected, the string exits the restaurant. Outside, the string doubles over in misery to the point of tying himself up. Then, he looks at his reflection in the restaurant window and begins to smile – an idea comes to mind. He ruffles his hair, still all tied up, walks back into the restaurant and, smiling, tells the host, “Table for one, please.” The host responds, “Aren’t you the string I just told would not be served?” “No!” the string replies, still smiling, “I’m a frayed knot.”

Looks can be deceiving.

“My Lord and my God.”

Thomas shared his disbelief to the other apostles after they saw the Risen Lord in his absence. And when he saw, he said, “My Lord and my God.”

How would we react if we saw the Risen Christ right here in this place?

Would we drop to our knees in homage? Would we faint in exultation? Would we cry out, “My Lord and my God?”

Dominican Fr. M. M. Philipon said, “We have no reason to envy the apostles. We have Him as much as they did.”

Looks can be deceiving. There are not two Christs; one in the bible who was born of the Virgin, walked with the Apostles, died on the cross and rose again, defeating death once and for all – and the one we see here, in this Word, on this altar and in that tabernacle. They are one Jesus; the same then, the same now, the same forever. Looks can be deceiving.

Jesus said, “Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.” We have seen! But do we believe?

On this Divine Mercy Sunday, we remember Jesus, His mercy, His forgiveness, His love. We remember Easter, today, the eighth day of Easter Day; a day so full of joy and celebration that it can’t be contained in a single 24-hour period.

Jesus, Himself, told St. Faustina that He deems this day necessary to express His, “...inconceivable mercy to be a refuge and a shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners,” and, “My mercy is so great that no mind, be it of man or of angel, will be able to fathom it throughout all eternity.

We could dwell and meditate on His Divine Mercy until the day we leave this earth. And, while we may never fully understand it, we would gain much in grace and blessings in the effort.

What we do know is that we begin as fallen and failed creatures, through the actions of our first parents who said, "No" to God when they were tricked by the serpent in the garden, and by our own actions when we look to ourselves and fail to look to our Lord and to our brothers and sisters.

We know we are made whole through the Cross where Christ laid His life down for each of us to destroy death and restore life.

We know we are redeemed by His Grace and Mercy when we acknowledge our failings, seek forgiveness and work towards charity and love as He designed us and desires of us.

And we start with what we see: the gifts of bread and wine, after the words of consecration, cease to be bread and wine, but the very Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of our dearly beloved Lord. Looks can be deceiving.

This is the same Lord who showed Himself to His disciples behind closed and locked doors after His resurrection. This is the same Lord who wants to be with us so badly that He continually, perpetually lowers Himself and allows himself to be contained in what appears to be the simple gifts of bread and wine. He lowers Himself by joining with us, each and every one of us, as we receive Him.

And we, in turn, become what we eat; we become joined with Him who loves us with an infinite love. And, by doing so, we become one with each other. Yes, each of us becomes Jesus and therefore one with each other. This is the wedding feast of the Lamb, the consummation of our unitive divine love.

Saint Pope John Paul II spoke about God's Divine Mercy often, and said: "Those who sincerely say 'Jesus, I trust in You' will find comfort in all their anxieties and fears... There is nothing more man needs than Divine Mercy – that love which is benevolent, which is compassionate, which raises man above his weakness to the infinite heights to the holiness of God."

So, on this Divine Mercy Sunday, the eighth day of Easter Day, we rejoice in God's providential care, we embrace God's mercy and love, and we recall that in participating in the Body and Blood of Christ, we are made one with Him and in Him.

And by that unity, we are one with each other, with the same mercy Christ shows for us. We are called to remember that, although looks can be deceiving, we can see Christ in one another. And, since Christ is mercy and wants mercy for us, He calls us to be one with Him and each other in mercy.

Even though looks can be deceiving, we can faithfully and confidently look at each other and not only see Christ in ourselves and our brother and sister, we can also be mercy for ourselves and for every person we encounter. So how should we respond when we see the Risen Lord?