

## SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 2:42-47; 1 Peter 1, 3-9; Jn 20, 19-31  
Excerpts from *Pope Francis - Angelus - 16 April 2023*  
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Brothers and sisters, today, Divine Mercy Sunday, remind us through Thomas, he is not the only one who struggles to believe. He represents all of us a little bit. Indeed, it is not always easy to believe, especially when, as in his case, one has suffered a tremendous disappointment. After a huge disappoint, it is difficult to believe. He had followed Jesus for years, running risks and enduring discomforts. But the Teacher was put on a cross like a criminal, and no one freed him. No one did anything! He is dead and everyone is afraid. How can he trust again? How can he trust the news saying He is alive? There was doubt inside him.

Thomas, however, shows that he is courageous. While the others are closed up inside the Upper Room out of fear, he goes out, running the risk that someone might recognize, report and arrest him. We could even think that, with his courage, he would have deserved **more than the others** to meet the Risen Lord. Instead, precisely because he is away, Thomas is not there when Jesus appears to the disciples for the first time, on Easter evening, therefore missing that opportunity. He had distanced himself from the community. How could he get [the opportunity] back? Only by going back to the others, returning there, to that family he had left behind, scared and sad. When he does so, when he returns, they tell him that Jesus had come, but he struggles to believe. He wants to see his wounds. And Jesus satisfies him: eight days later, he appears again in the midst of his disciples and shows them his wounds, his hands, his feet, these wounds that are the proof of his love, that are the ever-open channels of his mercy.

Thomas wants an extraordinary sign — to touch the wounds. Jesus shows them to him, but *in an ordinary way*, coming in front of everyone, in the community, not outside. As if saying to him: if you want to meet me, do not search far away; remain in the community, with the others, and don't go away. Pray with them. Break bread with them. And he says this **to us as well**. That is where you will find me; that is where I will show you the signs of the wounds impressed on my body: the signs of the Love that overcomes hatred, of the Pardon that disarms revenge, the signs of the Life that conquers death. It is there, **in the community**, that you will discover my face, as you share moments of doubt and fear with your brothers and sisters, clinging even more strongly to them. Without the community, it is difficult to find Jesus.

Brothers and sisters, the invitation given to Thomas is valid for us as well. Where do we seek the Risen One? In some special event, in some spectacular or amazing religious manifestation, only in our emotions and feelings?

Or rather in the community, in the Church, accepting the challenge of staying there, even though she (the Church) is not perfect? Despite all of her limitations and failures, which are **our** limitations and failings, our Mother Church is the Body of Christ. And it is there, in the Body of Christ, that, still now and forever, the greatest signs of his love can be found impressed. If in the name of this love, in the name of Jesus' wounds, we are willing to open our arms to those who are wounded by life, excluding no one from God's mercy but welcoming everyone, each person like a brother, like a sister. God welcomes everyone. May Mary, *the Mother of Mercy*, help us to love the Church and to make her a welcoming home for everyone.