

**FOR THE WEEKEND OF APRIL 10-11, 2021**

Second Sunday of Easter/Divine Mercy Sunday

**Gospel**Jn 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 the saw they 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.

**Homily helper / connection to stewardship / giving / charity / almsgiving**

* Jesus sends the Apostles on a “Mission: Impossible”
  + “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”
  + To be betrayed? Beaten, crucified, and killed as He was?
  + God does send us to love selflessly like Christ, which can seem impossible!
  + Maybe Thomas was right to doubt…
* But…we are sent in Relationship
  + We are sent ***as*** Jesus was sent by the Father—so united with God
  + This is why Jesus gives his Apostles—those he sends on mission—His Holy Spirit, the love between the Father and the Son, the presence of God
  + We are never sent without first being in relationship.
    - Relationship🡪Identity-🡪Mission (R.I.M.)
* During this Easter Season, emphasize relationship
  + Living a life of love and self-giving can seem daunting
  + When the mission seems hard, re-focus on the relationship
  + We can love others because Christ has already loved us, as we are reminded on this Divine Mercy Sunday, and has given us His Holy Spirit
  + Spending time with God in prayer, celebrating the Mass reverently and gratefully, can and will spill over into being more loving and giving in the rest of life
    - Supporting the Annual Diocesan Appeal is one example of this type of generosity

**Intercession**

That, rooted in our relationship with God and faithful to our mission, we may generously support our parish’s Annual Diocesan Appeal.

**Copy for bulletin announcement**

For most of us, the Christian life is so “routine” that we often don’t stop to think about how radical it is; selflessly loving God and others in imitation of Christ, who gave Himself on the Cross. In fact, if we really took seriously its demands, we’d probably be struck by how impossible it all seems; for man to love as God loves.

That’s likely what the Apostles were thinking when the Risen Lord, with the nailmarks still fresh in his hands, sends them on mission “as the Father has sent” Him. And yet, it’d be a mistake to only focus on the seemingly impossible demands of this mission. Because if we’re sent as Christ was sent by the Father, we’re also called to live in the same relational mode that He did and does, in complete dependence upon the Father. This is why Christ’s sending of the Apostles on mission is inherently connected with their reception of the Holy Spirit—the love between the Father and Son. If we’re not in relationship with God, the Christian life is truly impossible.

But of course, God invites us into relationship with Him today: in prayer, in the sacraments, and in Christian community. And when we’re relying on Him, the mission He sends us on can seem less impossible. Here at [parish name], we’ve discerned that part of our mission is to build up our parish community through the Annual Diocesan Appeal. During this Easter season, let’s ground ourselves deeply in our relationship with God, so that we can generously respond to this and the entirety of our mission.

**Copy for pulpit announcement**

Jesus sends us on mission as the Father sent Him. Part of our mission here at [parish name] is to build up our parish community through the Annual Diocesan Appeal. As you grow in relationship with God this Easter season, consider how He might be asking you to contribute.

**Social media post/content**

Photo: Two people walking down the road. Text reads: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” (John 20:21

Copy: Grounded in relationship with God, we’re sent on mission to spread Divine Mercy. Consider making a contribution to the Annual Appeal to build up our parish community!