



Pope at Mass on Divine Mercy Sunday: Let us rise with Thomas



Pope Francis celebrates Mass on Divine Mercy Sunday, inviting us to accept Jesus's mercy as the Apostle Thomas did, and to show that mercy to those around us. (playback included)

By Sr Bernadette M. Reis, fsp

“Last Sunday we celebrated the Lord’s resurrection; today we witness the resurrection of his disciple”. This was Pope Francis’s opening line of his homily for Divine Mercy Sunday.

He celebrated the liturgy at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Saxony, about 200 metres from St Peter’s Square. Once again, due to Covid-19 security measures, the Mass was celebrated without the presence of the faithful.

The disciple’s resurrection

One week after Jesus rises from the dead, the disciples are still “fearful, cringing behind ‘locked doors’”, Pope Francis continued. Jesus’s response to their fear is “Peace be with you!”

Starting over

Jesus “starts all over”, Pope Francis explained.

The “resurrection of his disciple begins”: with “faithful, patient mercy”. In this way, we learn that God does not get tired of lifting us up when we fall. God is like a father who allows us to take tentative steps and picks us up every time we fall.

“The hand”, the Pope said, “that always puts us back on our feet is mercy”. God knows we will continue to fall. But He will always pick us up because “He wants us to look to Him” rather than at our failings, the Pope said.

Thomas resurrects

All of the disciples had abandoned Jesus. They all felt guilty. Rather than “giving them a long sermon”, Jesus shows them His wounds.

Once Thomas, who had not been there the first time, touches those wounds, “he overtook the other disciples. He believed not only in the resurrection,” but in God’s boundless love as well.

When Thomas’s “wounded humanity enters into” Jesus’s wounds, he rises from the dead, Pope Francis stated.

Fragile crystals

Thomas helps us understand how precious we are to the Lord in our vulnerability, like beautiful, fragile, but precious crystals. If we are like that crystal, Jesus’s “light of mercy will shine in us and through us in the world”.

This light will help us wait for other people, as Jesus waited for Thomas, so no one is “left behind” as the entire world recovers from the Covid-19 crisis.

Crisis worse than Covid-19

“Selfish indifference is a worse crisis than the pandemic, the Pope warned. It is “spread by the thought that life is better if it is better for me”.

He begged us to learn from the first Christian community. Because they had “received mercy and lived with mercy” they pooled all their resources together, and distributed it to those in need.

“This is not some ideology”, the Pope clarified. “It is Christianity”.

Our future

Pope Francis concluded his homily urging us to welcome the current crisis as an “opportunity to prepare for our collective future”.

The recovery effort needs to embrace everyone, he said. Otherwise, “there will be no future for anyone.” The “simple and disarming love of Jesus” revived Thomas’s heart.

May we too accept Jesus’s mercy and show that mercy to the most vulnerable, Pope Francis said. That is what saves and builds the world.

