



## Divine Mercy Sunday - April 19, 2020



### Notes on the Gospel

Peace is more than a lack of conflict. True peace gives us happiness, since it is built on trust. The gospel tells us how Jesus gave his followers peace because they trusted him. He offers us the same peace.

Late Sunday evening, the followers of Jesus locked the doors where they met because they feared the Jewish leaders. They feared the Jewish leadership. If they killed Jesus, the followers reasoned, the leadership would certainly be looking for us. Barred doors made Jesus' followers look more suspicious. At the time, trust within the Jewish community was built upon open access. Doors were never locked. Neighbor children could enter one's house at will. Jews lived private lives in the open. Anyone who locked their doors (save the rural family who lived miles from their neighbor), cut themselves off from the community.

Suddenly, Jesus appeared before them and said, "Shalom." Shalom "Peace be with you." ("peace" in Hebrew) meant God was working in the world. When God worked, he put the world in balance. No war, no hatred, no cynicism could overcome God's providence. When God worked, he put the spirit in balance. No fear, no doubt, no lack of trust could overcome the sheer joy of God's presence. Shalom meant everything was right in God's world.

"Peace be with you." After he spoke, Jesus showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They felt great joy when they saw the Lord. Again, Jesus said to them, "Peace be with you. Just as the Father sent me, I am sending you." Then, Jesus breathed on them. "Take in the Holy Spirit," Jesus said.

"If you forgive someone's sins, their sins are and will ever be forgiven. If you don't forgive their sins, their sins are not forgiven." But Thomas was not with them when Jesus appeared. The other followers told him over and over, "We've seen the Lord!" Thomas said, "I won't believe it until I inspect the nail scars in his hands and touch the scar in his side."

The next Sunday, the followers were inside along with Thomas. Jesus came into the locked-room, stood before them, and said, "Peace be with you." Then Jesus said to Thomas, "Take your finger and inspect my hands here. Take your hand and inspect my side. Give up your doubts and believe!" Thomas replied "You are my Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "You believe because you have seen me. Those who haven't seen me and believe are really happy."

When his followers saw Jesus alive with his deadly wound, they realized the "Shalom" of Jesus, for they witnessed God's activity in the world. Fear left them, for now they believed. Joy entered their hearts. Again Jesus said "Shalom" with a command and a gift. The command: Go into the world. As the Father send Jesus into the physical world, Jesus would now send his followers into the cultural world. With the command came the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now they could obey the missionary command to proclaim repentance and forgive sin. Jesus told his followers to forgive or retain sin like a knot loosening or tied closely together. If the followers forgive, however, they must loosen the sinner from the guilt now and in the future. Sin was never to be brought up again.



## PILGRIMAGES TO THE BASILICA

The Basilica of Saint Mary of the Assumption welcomes all visitors encouraging them to come, pray, and enjoy our beautiful church. If you are a member of a group who would like to tour our Basilica or make a spiritual pilgrimage, please let us know how we can be of assistance.

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### Special Events & Scheduled Pilgrimages at the Basilica:



- May - 3, - First Communion (St. Mary's)
- May - 10, - Mother's Day dinner – Saint Henry's
- May - 17, - 50<sup>th</sup> Ordination Mass & Reception of Fr. Dale Tornes
- May - 20, - Parkersburg Catholic Baccalaureate Mass & Reception
- May - 21, - Saint Mary Graduation Mass & Reception
- May - 31, - Confirmation (Noon Mass – (Bishop Monforton)
- June - 24, - Diocesan pilgrimage to the Basilica
- Sept. - 9, - CWC Convention Keynote speaker

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## REVERENTIAL QUIET IN THE BASILICA

It is an ancient tradition in the Church to have a reverential quiet tone in a Catholic Church – especially in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. More and more, this tradition is being ignored in the Basilica. Sometimes, people are trying to pray before or after Mass – we need to respect them. Please observe a quiet tone when you are present in the Basilica.



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## DECEASED PRIESTS OF DIOCESE

On Wednesday, we remember the 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the death of Fr. Philip Baroni. May God grant peace and eternal memory to Fr. Baroni who served our Diocese of Steubenville.

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## ANNUAL PARISH/SHARE CAMPAIGN

The Twenty-eighth Annual Diocesan/Parish Share Campaign has begun. This year the Diocesan goal is \$1,340,000.00. Our new Parish goal is \$102,711.52. In addition to funding the Diocese, the D/PSC provides an opportunity for us to raise funds for our own Parish needs. After the Parish goal is reached, all other funds are returned to the Parish in the form of rebates.

I am sincerely grateful to you for your gift in the past, and I ask you to support this annual campaign again this year. I urge you to be part of the mission of the Church. May God bless you for all you have done in the past and for all that, with God's grace you will do now and in the future.



## **ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AT THE BASILICA**

The Eucharist is Jesus Christ Himself, and He invites us to a personal visit with Him in our basilica. In the Eucharist, Jesus fulfills His promise: "Behold I am with you always, even to the end of the world." Eucharistic adoration is the most powerful means that we have, to transform our lives and the life of our parish. Adoration provides the opportunity to spend time in the presence of the very Son of God.

Silent Adoration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament brings many riches. When we place ourselves in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament we place ourselves before the gaze of Christ who loves us and wants us to know that love. God comes rushing up to welcome and embrace us, and we need to let our heart welcome His extravagant, self-risking love that flows from heaven. In the silence of the Eucharist we enter the silence of the Father from whom the Word eternally springs. This is what Adoration means. Come and visit the Lord in Adoration this Wednesday and/or Friday.



## **GRATITUDE FOR YOUR DONATION AT THIS TIME**

Several of you have been sending in your weekly offerings. It is very much appreciated since it really helps our parish to meet our churches administrative expenses. God bless you for the love that you show to our parish.

## **Social distancing does not mean spiritual distancing**

Churches may be closed and public worship suspended, yet the Resurrection of Jesus continues to bring hope. The word corona means "crown" in Latin and the coronavirus pandemic has become "a crown of thorns for us all".

In the hours before his death, Jesus, was crowned with thorns. It became one of his terrible sufferings before his death on the Cross of Calvary. Jesus suffers with us in our sufferings. The Easter message is clear: by suffering with the suffering Jesus, we enter by grace into the hope of Resurrection in him.

The term "social distancing", does not mean spiritual distancing. This Easter we are called to a new kind of creativity which will allow physical distancing to produce spiritual closeness – closeness to God and to each other. The period of Lent, preparing for Easter, is a time when we let go of some of the extra things in our lives, focusing on what is essential and strengthening our trust in the faithfulness of God's care for us. We might think of these months as an extended and dramatic period of Lent or retreat.

Our Easter celebrations this year will be muted. Yet they are an anticipation of the hope we proclaim each Easter, of the God who knows the desolation, darkness and emptiness of Jesus' death on the cross, and who brings the new life of the Resurrection.



# THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION

506 4th STREET • MARIETTA OH 45750  
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April 19, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

We do not know what glorified Risen body of Christ's is like. We do know that the risen Jesus could be touched by his followers. His body still had the wounds of the passion. On the other hand, he entered locked rooms at will and appeared to his followers as he wished. His body was not limited by space and time. While his body possessed signs of his past, it was transformed into a new kind of life.

A week after Easter, Jesus again appeared to His apostles, and this time, Thomas was with them. Jesus greeted them with "Shalom." Turning to Thomas, Jesus challenged his faith. Thomas responded with two titles for Jesus: Lord and God. Thomas acknowledged the rightful place of Jesus as Lord; he also saw God working through the Risen Christ. Thomas finally received Christ's gift of Shalom. Thomas touched Jesus, and believed. "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Happy (are) those not having seen and having believed." Jesus was speaking about us.

In contrast to Thomas, Jesus blessed those who believed without seeing him raised from the dead. Here John used the word "believe" in two senses: to trust ("believe in") and to hold onto the truth ("believe (something) about..."). Blessed were those who placed their personal trust in Christ (believe in); they do not need proof of his resurrection, for they know he is alive. But, even blessed are those who hold onto the truths of faith (believe...about), for, with an open heart, they will soon experience the risen Christ. Belief in these two sense stood against the cynicism found in Thomas.

Without the Resurrection, Christianity would be nothing more than a school that taught the wisdom of a great teacher. With the Resurrection, however, Christianity became a road to intimacy with God. The Resurrection justifies the life, works, and teachings of Jesus. Through the lens of the Resurrection, we can see this life, these works and teachings in the context of Scripture and realize "Jesus is Lord." Faith in the Resurrection leads us to the conclusion Jesus is true God and true man.

Through the Resurrection, we receive the gift of a new eternal life, free from evil. We become one with our Savior who died and rose for us. And, as he rose, Christ assures us that we, too, will rise on the last day. The peace Christ give us heals the fear and cynicism of the world. This peace builds bridges of trust and allows us to walk together to the Father. His peace allows us to continue to believe and to hold on to his very life. Let us, then, offer each other the peace of Christ, the Shalom of His Spirit.

Sincerely in the Risen Lord,

Rev. Msgr. John M. Campbell

## Francis offers message of hope to a world in lockdown



Pope Francis has offered a powerful message of hope during the coronavirus pandemic, in his first ever interview with a British journalist. He said the COVID-19 pandemic was a “place of conversion”, a chance we must not let slip away. He said the Church would come out of the crisis with its institutions reconfigured according to the spirit of early Christianity, and less attached to “certain ways” of thinking.

He focused on his response to the Coronavirus pandemic. “What we are living now is a place of conversion, and we have the chance to begin. So let’s not let it slip from us, and let’s move ahead,” he said. We have to respond to confinement with creativity. “We can either get depressed and alienated – through media that can take us out of our reality – or we can get creative.”

He explained what he meant by conversion: “Go down into the underground, and pass from the hyper-virtual, fleshless world to the suffering flesh of the poor. This is the conversion we have to undergo. And if we don’t start there, there will be no conversion.”

“We have to learn to live in a Church that exists in the tension between harmony and disorder provoked by the Holy Spirit. If you ask me which book of theology can best help you understand this, it would be the Acts of the Apostles. There you will see how the Holy Spirit de-institutionalizes what is no longer of use, and institutionalizes the future of the Church. That is the Church that needs to come out of the crisis.”

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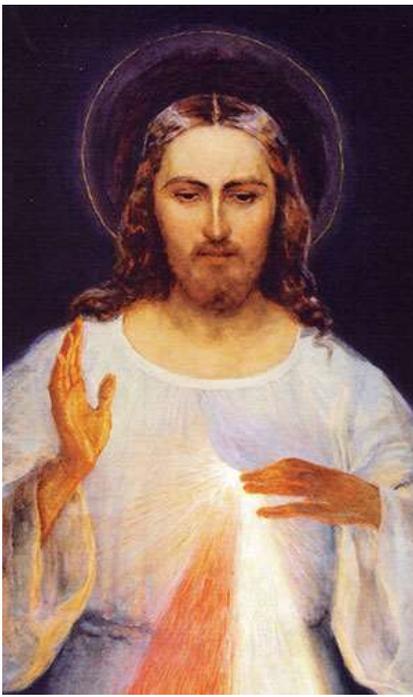
## We draw courage from our crucified and risen Lord...

In the midst of the pandemic of coronavirus, we likely feel much uncertainty and may ask where God is to be found in this situation. We can find solace in the account of the Passion of Jesus. In reflecting on Jesus’ suffering, death and resurrection, we can find peace remembering the Lord embraces our fragility, heals our sins, and draws us close to Him, transforming our doubts into faith and our fears into hope. God’s power is revealed in humble and self-sacrificial love. We, like the disciples, may have preferred the Lord to manifest his strength by resolving our problems according to our own measure of what is right. Yet the death and resurrection of Jesus show that while earthly power passes away, only love endures forever.

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## May God heal our sick world

We pray for healing for our sick world, country and peoples that God may visit us soon and restore us. We are compelled to ask God to heal our world, heal our land and heal his people so that we may return to the best of times in worship of him. We pray for the authorities, for doctors, pharmacists, nurses, caregivers, donors, priests and all others who are working hard to stop diseases and especially the coronavirus. May God strengthen them and make them successful in their work.



## Divine Mercy Sunday

Mankind's need for the message of Divine Mercy took on dire urgency in the 20th century, when civilization began to experience a distancing from a sense of God as well as a loss of the sanctity and dignity of human life.

In the 1930s, St. Maria Faustina Kowalska was chosen to receive private revelations concerning Divine Mercy that were recorded in her Diary. St. John Paul II explains: "This was precisely the time when those ideologies of evil, nazism and communism, were taking shape.

Sister Faustina became the herald of the one message capable of off-setting the evil of those ideologies. God is mercy itself. "For this reason, when I was called to the See of Peter, I felt impelled to pass on those experiences of a fellow Pole, that deserve a place in the treasury of the universal Church" St. John Paul II said. In his second encyclical, "Rich in Mercy," St. John Paul II offered an extended meditation on the mystery of God's mercy, which he calls "the greatest of the attributes and perfections of God." He returned to this theme throughout his pontificate.

On May 5, 2000, five days after the canonization of St. Faustina, the Vatican decreed that the Second Sunday of Easter would henceforth be known as Divine Mercy Sunday. The devotion to Divine Mercy Sunday grew rapidly after its designation by the pope and is now widely celebrated by Catholics. The Divine Mercy image is often carried in processions on Divine Mercy Sunday, and is placed in a location in the church so that it can be venerated by those who attend the Mass

John Paul II, who died in April 2005 on the vigil of Divine Mercy Sunday, was himself beatified on Divine Mercy Sunday, May 1, 2011, by his successor, Pope Benedict XVI, and was canonized on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 27, 2014, by Pope Francis.

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## US Bishops Cancel Spring Assembly Due to Coronavirus

This is the first time in the history of the USCCB that a scheduled plenary assembly has been canceled. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has canceled its Spring General Assembly due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The assembly, one of the two annual gatherings of the bishops of the United States, was scheduled to be held June 10-12 in Detroit, Michigan. The meeting would have been the first to be led by newly-elected USCCB President Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles.

In a statement released by the USCCB, Archbishop Gomez said that the decision to cancel the event happened after a vote by the Administrative Committee. "The Administrative Committee made this very difficult decision with consideration of multiple factors, but most importantly the health, well-being and safety of the hundreds of bishops, staff, observers, guests, affiliates, volunteers, contractors and media involved with the general meetings," said Archbishop Gomez. The USCCB's fall meeting, which is held each year in Baltimore, Maryland, is still scheduled to go ahead. The USCCB's bylaws state that there must be at least one plenary assembly per year.

## [This Holy Thursday, Pope Praises Priests During Mass in Coena Domini in Nearly Empty St. Peter's Basilica](#)



‘I Thank God for the Priesthood’

This Holy Thursday, Pope Francis has praised all the good and selfless priests worldwide.

Last year, the Pope visited the Velletri Correctional Facility, to celebrate the Mass *in Coena Domini* with the Rite of the washing of the feet, beginning the Paschal Triduum.

This year, as much of the world is in lockdown to prevent against further spreading of coronavirus, claiming thousands and thousands of deaths worldwide, and already more than 18,000 in Italy itself, the Pope's schedule has changed.

He did not do the traditional Chrism Mass in the morning, and later, he celebrated in a nearly empty St. Peter's Basilica the Mass *in Coena Domini* without the rite for the Washing of the Feet. During his homily, he spoke about priests and praised the countless who are selfless, even to the point of giving their lives. He lamented the more than 60 priests have died in Italy from COVID19. "Have courage," the Pope encouraged priests, as the Lord is always with them. Francis praised those who travel to far off lands, even often giving their lives, and sometimes, to hardly ever be remembered by name.

He also remembered those who serve villages, who may not be well known to the world, but to their parishioners. The Holy Father applauded how they know the people they serve personally, and again —as he has in the past—reminded that priests should even try to know the names of the dogs of their parishioners.

The Holy Father lamented how some bad priests have made the lives of the others often subject to insult and disrespect, decrying the abuse crisis.

The Pope expressed his disappointment that the Chrism Mass could not take place in the Basilica this Holy Week, and how he wishes, if the situation were to get better, that it could perhaps be done before Pentecost (otherwise, next year).

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## **Catholic Converts Wait to Enter the Church**

With suspension of public Easter vigil Masses, our RCIA group waits as the coronavirus pandemic delays their formal entry into the Church. It is a severe disappointment, but, ultimately, we trust God's plan."

As the rest of us have been prohibited from attending the Triduum liturgies (Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter vigil) and Easter Masses throughout the country because of government restrictions to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. While there is no way to know when social distancing bans will be lifted, our hope is that by Pentecost (May 31) or the Solemnity of Corpus Christi (June 11), parishes will be able to initiate the elect and welcome candidates.

# Did Fulton Sheen Prophecy About These Times?

In a talk 72 years ago, Bishop Fulton Sheen said “We are at the end of Christendom.” He didn’t mean Christianity or the Church, he said, “Christendom is economic, political, social life as inspired by Christian principles. That is ending. Look at the symptoms: the breakup of the family, divorce, abortion, immorality, general dishonesty.”

“Why is it that so few realize the seriousness of our present crisis?” he asked. Then gave the answer: “Partly because men do not want to believe their own times are wicked, partly because it involves too much self-accusation. Only those who live by faith really know what is happening in the world. The great masses without faith are unconscious of the destructive processes going on.” Certainly seems a snapshot of the usual suspects – the headlines and stories of today.

Sheen wondered if we’re even aware of the signs of the times because “basic dogmas of the modern world [were] dissolving before our very eyes.” Replacing them were the assumptions man has (1) “no other function in life than to produce and acquire wealth,” (2) the idea man is naturally good and “has no need of a God to give Him rights, or a Redeemer to salvage him from guilt, because progress is automatic thanks to science-education and evolution, which will one day make man a kind of a god,” and (3) the idea reason isn’t for discovering “the meaning and goal of life, namely the salvation of the soul, but merely to devise new technical advances to make on this earth a city of man to displace the city of God.”

Sheen pointed out the signs of the times reveal we’re “definitely at the end of a non-religious era of civilization. We cannot turn from God without hurting ourselves. Mediocrity and compromise characterize the lives of many Christians. Many read the same novels as modern pagans, educate their children in the same godless way, listen to the same commentators who have no other standard than judging today by yesterday, and tomorrow by today, allow pagan practices such as divorce and remarriage to creep into the family. We are no longer influencing the world.”

Over the centuries the Church has had its Good Fridays, he reminds us, but there’s always Easter Sundays “because Jesus promised the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.’ (Matthew 28:20) As bleak as things may be, never has “there been such a strong argument for the need of Christianity, for we are now discovering that our misery and woes, our wars and their revolutions increase in direct ratio and proportion to the neglect of Christianity.

We must realize that a moment of crisis is not a time of despair, but of opportunity. The more we anticipate the doom, the more we can avoid it. It was because of famine the prodigal said: ‘I will arise, and will go to my father.’ The very disciplines of God create hope. The thief on the right came to God by a crucifixion.

“One of the surprises of heaven will be to see how many saints were made in the midst of chaos, and war and revolution.” The great multitude standing before the throne of God are identified as “These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Revelation 7:14)