

Divine Mercy Sunday

April 23, 2017

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Tangible Proof

Trust is a tough lesson to learn. Oh, we trust our senses—those things we can touch, feel, see, hear—but everything else is suspect. After a few hard lessons early in life we generally distrust people too, except for a few chosen loved ones.



Jesus said, "Take your finger and examine my hands. Put your hand in my side. Do not persist in your unbelief, but believe!"
John 20:27

The big question in our faith life then is how to trust a God that we can not touch, hear or see directly. Just like Thomas in the upper room, we struggle with our need to "prove" God for ourselves. And the answer is still the same for us today. First, as Jesus said to Thomas, "Come," draw near to Him. Spend time in prayer and build your relationship. We trust the people we know and love best, so we will trust God more when He becomes one of those best-known. Then touch His wounds. Meditate on the sacrifices He made for you. Touch the wounds of His children here on earth and minister to Him through them. You will find His presence a sure and comforting fact when your hands are busy with His work.

It is the miracle of God's mercy and understanding. Jesus' answers to Thomas still work for us. Try it today.

In Gratitude

On behalf of the entire parish, we take this opportunity to express our thanks to everyone who gave of their time and talents to make our Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter celebrations beautiful ones. The ceremonies, music and singing were inspirational. Thank you to those who cleaned and decorated the church and church grounds to give a special appearance for our services. We want to express an extra special thank you to those who regularly clean the church, week after week, so that it will be especially attractive for our daily worship services as well as special events.

The altar flowers were beautifully arranged to give fitting tribute to our Risen Lord. Thank you to all who served at and prepared for the Masses—ushers, lectors, Eucharistic ministers, musicians, altar servers, deacons and parish staff. We appreciate the loving stewardship of time and talents of those who made these celebrations possible.



Offertory Giving

In today's first reading, the four activities of the earliest church are introduced to us as priorities of the church: devotion to the teachings of the apostles, communal fellowship, the Eucharist and prayer. The early members of the church saw themselves as devoted stewards of these activities. These were not options. They were the fruits of a genuine conversion to a life in Christ. Sharing in the Eucharist was the most intimate expression of fellowship, while the most common expression of fellowship in the New Testament was that of sharing financial resources—giving. It was not a perfect community, but one that gave evidence of God's active presence in its midst. This early community offers us an excellent example of how to better exercise stewardship in our own parish families.

Weekly Budgeted Need	\$7,100.00
Last Sunday	
Envelopes (Adult)	\$6,436.00
Loose	1,042.00
Holy Thursday	<u>444.00</u>
Total	\$7,922.00
Progress Report	
Cumulative Budget	\$298,200.00
Cumulative Income	<u>301,014.68</u>
Ahead	\$2,814.68
Good Friday	
(for the Holy Land)	\$825.00

Catholic Home Missions Appeal

Next weekend's second collection will be the Catholic Home Missions Appeal. Your contribution will provide catechesis, seminarian education, lay ministry training and other pastoral programs in needy dioceses across the United States.

God Can Use You

Do not say you can not gladden hearts, elevate spirits or set men free. Do not say that you have no grace or influence, that all you have to give is at the most only common as bread and water. Give yourself to your Lord for the service of men with what you have. Has He not changed water into wine? Can He not change trembling efforts into deeds of strength? God has work for you to do. Trust Him to empower you to do it.

Mass Intentions Requested

Monday, April 24

(Acts 4:23-31; Jn 3:1-8)

No Mass Scheduled

Tuesday, April 25

(1 Pt 5:5b-14; Mk 16:15-20)

8:00 a.m. Altar Society Members
Living and Deceased

Wednesday, April 26

(Acts 5:17-26; Jn 3:16-21)

6:30 p.m. Purgatorial Society

Thursday, April 27

(Acts 5:27-33; Jn 3:31-36)

8:00 a.m. Jerry Templet, Sr.

Friday, April 28

(Acts 5:34-42; Jn 6:1-15)

8:00 a.m. Sonia Braud

Saturday, April 29

(Acts 6:1-7; Jn 6:16-21)

5:00 p.m. Capt. Pete Vogt, John L. Marchese, George & Meritha Laughlin, Eugene Blanchard Jr., A.J. Sconza Jr., Raye Ann Story, Kyle Story, Isabel Margario, Roger Doucette, Imelda Gares, Tina Mangano, Rosemary Poche, Ken & Adele Salzer, Joseph D'Antoni Jr., Lee & Yvonne Tracey, Louis Mangano Sr. & Jr., Roszczynialski Family

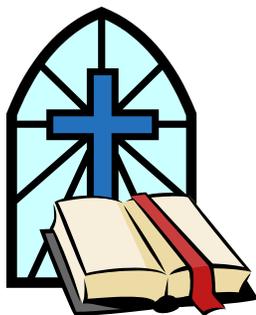
Sunday, April 30 Third Sunday of Easter

(Acts 2:14, 22-33; 1 Pt 1:17-21; Lk 24:13-35)

7:00 a.m. Scuddy and Engelle Clements

8:30 a.m. Ronnie & Betty Lambert, Sonia Braud, Bruce Frederick, Suzanne Renckly, Jerry Templet Sr., Andrew Lambert, Margaret Clayton, Adele Salzer, Amy Fandal, Marlene Ragusa, Richard Calkins

10:30 a.m. Parishioners



WEEKLY EVENTS

Legion of Mary—Monday 7:00 p.m. in St. Anthony Hall

Altar Society—Pray the Rosary Tuesday following the 8:00 a.m. Mass and St. Jude Novena. Afterwards, members will join in the Parish Hall for their monthly meeting.

Tuesday Morning Rosary—Tuesday after the 8:00 a.m. Mass and the St. Jude Novena in St. Anthony Hall

RCIA Tracks I & II—Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. in classrooms

Apologetics—Wednesday, April 26, at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall; Topic: "Why the Church?"

Patriotic Rosary—Thursday at 7:00 p.m. in the Church

Women's Spirituality—Sunday, April 30, at 11:30 a.m. in St. Anthony Hall.

Blood Drive—Sunday, April 30, beginning at 8:00 a.m. in the mobile unit outside the church until 12:00 p.m. to accept life giving donations of blood from parishioners. Given the lack of donations this winter, blood replacement is a real consideration. Remember to eat before donating.



Annual Church Picnic

CHURCH PICNIC The annual Church Picnic is scheduled for Sunday, May 7, after the 10:30 a.m. Mass. There will be chicken, hamburgers and, of course, buns, lettuce and tomatoes with which to build sandwiches. There will also be potato salad, baked beans and jambalaya to complement the meats, and lemonade, punch and tea to quench your thirst. The picnic is **FREE** and provided by the church in celebration of our parish family. We are asking that you bring a dessert or small individual bags of chips that will serve at least ten people. *Make sure you set the date aside and plan to join us for this wonderful family day at our church!!*

Sanctuary Lamp

The Sanctuary Lamp, which burns on the Altar 24 hours a day, seven days a week (except Good Friday), is dedicated to the memory of a deceased person, family or group for that week. For a donation of \$10.00, you can have someone memorialized for the week. Contact the Church Office for details.

Tabernacle Lamp

This week the Tabernacle lamp in the Sanctuary burns in memory of **George Schaefer, Sr.**



Pray For The Sick

Valdeana Bauer, Audrey Bonnet, Diana Bradshaw, JoAnn Brewin, Sonia Braud, George & Wanda Butko, May Caballero, Patricia Cuccia, Dotsy Chedville, Pat Downey, Steve Dunn, Marcelle Ernewein, Carroll Fourcade, Julia Drake, Jeanette Gomez, John Howard, Virgie Hurstell, Allen & Joan Jagneaux, Maria Kalcic, Gloriette Kiern, Elizabeth Kittel, Cheryl Martin, Shirley Matthews, Vito Montalabano, Jessie O'Dell, Cheryl Poiroux, Marlene Ragusa, Robert Reinecke, Ed Roszczynialski, Adele Salzer, Cathy Smith

Lord, Use My Talents

Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and "beautiful" for Thee.
Take my intellect and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Guide Book Advertising Opportunity

We have contracted Guide Book Publishing (GBP) to publish a Guide Book and Directory for our congregation that will be updated and delivered directly to your homes annually. This book will contain everything pertinent to our church: the various ministries and organizations plus a complete directory of all members. This book is being provided and mailed to each member at no cost to our church. Local businesses are being solicited to advertise in the book. GBP would prefer to place advertisements from members of our congregation over your business's competitors. If you own or manage a business and would like to find out about advertising in our book, please call the office at 958-863-7935, ext. 3, during business hours.

Update Membership Information

Does the Church database have your family membership correct? Here is your chance to update your information with any changes, additions, or deletions for our annual Guide Book and Directory.

Please let us know if you have changed your phone number, have a new address, and/or if you want your address and/or phone number published

Mother's Day Rosary Crusade For Life

 The 19th Annual Mother's Day Rosary Crusade for Life will be Saturday, May 13, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. starting with Mass at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Shrine, 2701 State Street, New Orleans. It will be followed by Eucharistic Adoration, five decades of the Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet and Benediction. Archbishop Gregory Aymond will be the celebrant. This prayer event is sponsored by the Archdiocesan Sidewalk Counseling and Prayer Ministry, a ministry of the Respect Life Office of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. All are welcome. For information, call Pam Richard at 504-460-9360 or 985-809-0773.

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention

"That young people may respond generously to their vocations and seriously consider offering themselves to God in the priesthood or consecrated life."

No Strings Attached

Our Lady of Lourdes, 400 Westchester Boulevard, Slidell, will present the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra's Woodwind Octet in concert Sunday, April 30, at 2:30 p.m. The program "No Strings Attached" will feature musicians from the orchestra's fine wood and brass sections! Admission is \$20.00. Tickets may be purchased online at www.lpomusic.com

Easter

The word "Easter" comes from Old English, meaning the "East." The sun which rises in the East, bringing light, warmth and hope, is a symbol for the Christian of the rising Christ, the true Light of the world. The Paschal Candle is a central symbol of this divine light. The Easter candle, lighted for the first time from the new fire of the Easter Vigil, is placed in a prominent place in the sanctuary between Easter and Pentecost and should be lighted for all liturgical services in this season. The candle is then placed in the baptistry area and can be used at funerals and at the sacraments of baptism and confirmation.



What Are We Locking Out

So often in our lives, we put our faith in a strong door and a trusty bolt. The feeling of being safe and secure is based on those physical or emotional walls we can build for ourselves, like children creating blanket forts under the dining room table. We pile up barricades against the things we fear and believe in their protection, forgetting the power and presence of God. Just as Jesus appeared in the upper room to His disciples, as they huddled behind locked doors in fear, He appears in each of our lives, behind our false walls and defenses. He is suddenly in our midst, saying "peace" to fearful hearts. He reveals His risen self to us, as He did to the disciples that day, reminding us that we are never alone, and that He is the only true security. The power of the resurrected Christ means we have nothing to fear once we stop hiding behind locked doors, and open our hearts to Him.

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Divine Mercy

In the year 2000, Pope John Paul II declared the Second Sunday of Easter to be Divine Mercy Sunday, a feast day recognizing the Divine Mercy revelations of St. Faustina Kowalska and more generally, highlighting the mercy of God in its many forms.

Today's Gospel reading from John highlights several aspects of divine mercy. The Risen Christ appears to His disciples and *breathes* on them, imparting His *Spirit* to them (the Greek word *pneuma* means both "breath" and "spirit"). By imparting His Spirit, Jesus gave His disciples the power to forgive sins. This healing power—previously a divine prerogative—is now shared with the representatives of Jesus on earth as they are filled with the divine presence. The mercy of God, so often expressed by Jesus' ministry in the forgiveness of sins, continues in the Church.

Another expressions of divine mercy in today's Gospel can be found in the gentle account of Jesus' encounter with Thomas, who was also called "Didymus" or "the Twin" (and to whom tradition has given the unfortunate nickname "Doubting Thomas"). When Jesus appears to the disciples and imparts His Spirit to them, Thomas is not present. Of course, they later tell him that Jesus appeared to them, but Thomas doubts and declares: "*Unless I see the mark of the nails in His hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.*"

A week later, Jesus returns. He does not lecture Thomas. Instead, He offers Thomas what he wanted: proof. He invites Thomas to touch the nail marks in His hands, to place his hand in Jesus' side (where the soldier's spear pierced Him). He urges Thomas, "Do not be unbelieving, but believe."

Jesus takes a gentle tone with Thomas. He wants him to believe, have the joy of resurrection of faith. He understands human doubt and the challenges to faith. He says to Thomas, who has had a wonderful advantage: "*Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.*" If Jesus was patient and merciful with Thomas, how much more merciful and patient will He be with us when we doubt?

Christ Is Risen—Rejoice!

Let all things seen and unseen their notes of gladness blend. For Christ the Lord is risen. Our joy that hath no end.

St. John of Damascus

The 50 Days Of Easter

The Longest Liturgical Season

The Octave Of Easter

The Easter Vigil is the "Mother of All Vigils." Easter Sunday, then, is the greatest of all Sundays, and Easter Time is the most important of all liturgical Times. Easter is the celebration of the Lord's resurrection from the dead, culminating in His Ascension to the Father and sending of the Holy Spirit upon the church. There are 50 days of Easter from the first Sunday to Pentecost. It is characterized, above all, by the joy of glorified life and the victory over death, expressed most fully in the great resounding cry of the Christian: Alleluia! All faith flows from faith in the resurrection: "If Christ has not been raised, then empty is our preaching: empty, too is your faith." (1 Cor 15:14)

One way the church pursues this goal of seeing God present in the world is through the reading of the Acts of the Apostles. At Masses all through the Easter season, our usual practice of reading from the Old Testament is replaced by reading from the Acts of the Apostles. These reading tell the story of the church's earliest days, and the beginnings of our faith's spreading throughout the ancient world. These stories of heroism, controversies, persecutions and miracles all testify to the continued presence of the Risen Christ in the world, through the lives of His disciples and the actions of the Holy Spirit.

Most Catholics today receive Holy Communion each time they go to Mass, but that was not always the case. In fact, for a variety of reasons, many Catholics in the past very rarely received the Eucharist. Therefore, the Catholic Church made it a requirement for all Catholics to receive Communion at least once per year, during the Easter season. The Church also urges the faithful to receive the Sacrament of Confession in preparation for that Easter Communion, though you are only required to go to Confession if you have committed a mortal sin.

How Splendid The Cross

How splendid the cross of Christ! It brings life, not death; light, not darkness; Paradise, not its loss. It is the wood on which the Lord, like a great warrior was wounded in hands and feet and side, but healed thereby our wounds. A tree had destroyed us; a tree now brought us life.



St. Theodore of Studios