

Divine mercy is like the wind: invisible, but with effects that can be sensed. We may feel the lifting of a burden off our shoulders as a fresh breeze on a new day and a new chance to do good. Today on Divine Mercy Sunday we hear John's account of the coming of the Holy Spirit. John speaks of the breath of Christ bringing the Spirit upon the disciples. May we realize God's divine mercy in the cleansing, comforting, renewing breath of new life.

As we gather let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

Profession of Faith p.

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (bow as we say) and by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Introductory Rite:

Greeting:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
Blessed be God forever. **Blessed be God forever.**

Penitential Rite: p.

Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to participate in this sacred celebration.

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Opening Prayer:

God of everlasting mercy, who in the very recurrence of the paschal feast kindle the faith of the people you have made your own, increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed, that all may grasp and rightly understand in what font they have been washed, by whose Spirit they have been reborn, by whose Blood they have been redeemed.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Liturgy of the Word:

First Reading p.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Acts 5:12-16

Many signs and wonders were done among the people at the hands of the apostles. They were all together in Solomon's portico. None of the others dared to join them, but the people esteemed them. Yet more than ever,

believers in the Lord, great numbers of men and women, were added to them. Thus they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and mats so that when Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on one or another of them. A large number of people from the towns in the vicinity of Jerusalem also gathered, bringing the sick and those disturbed by unclean spirits, and they were all cured.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-2

R/. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.

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Let the house of Israel say, "His mercy endures forever." Let the house of Aaron say, "His mercy endures forever." Let those who fear the LORD say, "His mercy endures forever." **R/.**

I was hard pressed and was falling, but the LORD helped me. My strength and my courage is the LORD, and he has been my savior. The joyful shout of victory in the tents of the just: **R/.**

The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. By the LORD has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes. This is the day the LORD has made; let us be glad and rejoice in it. **R/.**

Second Reading

A reading from the Book of Revelation

Revelation 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19

I, John, your brother, who share with you the distress, the kingdom, and the endurance we have in Jesus, found myself on the island called Patmos because I proclaimed God's word and gave testimony to Jesus. I was caught up in spirit on the Lord's day and heard behind me a voice as loud as a trumpet, which said, "Write on a scroll what you see." Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me, and when I turned, I saw seven gold lampstands and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, wearing an ankle-length robe, with a gold sash around his chest.

When I caught sight of him, I fell down at his feet as though dead. He touched me with his right hand and said, "Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last, the one who lives. Once I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever. I hold the keys to death and the netherworld. Write down, therefore, what you have seen, and what is happening, and what will happen afterwards."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

John 20:19-31

Glory to you, Lord

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 they saw the 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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection on the Word:

- In today's Gospel Jesus breathes on his disciples, and in that holy breath they each receive the Holy Spirit. Considering what we have been through in recent years, the idea of breathing on people inside a locked room is more than a little unsettling. But keep in mind that one's breath contains much more than potential germs and viruses. One's breath contains the very force of life. God blew the breath of life into Adam's nostrils. So too in an emergency can we breathe life back into a person who has stopped breathing. We can imagine the disciples holding their collective breath in the days after Jesus' burial. He was no longer in the tomb. Mary Magdalene said she had seen him. But how could this be? What could have happened? Then he stood before them, wounds and all. Realizing he was alive, they let out their breath in relief and rejoiced. Then when he breathed on them, they received new life, new life in the Spirit.
- In his parable of the lost sheep, Jesus tells of a shepherd who leaves ninety-nine sheep behind in order to find the single sheep who went astray. After finding it, rescuing it, and bringing it home, he rejoices for the sake of this one who was lost and is now found. Fast forward to today's Gospel. When Jesus appeared to the disciples after his death and resurrection, a single disciple was missing: Thomas. John doesn't specifically mention that Jesus noticed, but undoubtedly he realized his absence. And so the following week the Good Shepherd returns, intent on finding Thomas, whose doubts had led him astray, to restore him to the fold. And Thomas, perhaps realizing that the Lord had returned just for him, just to relieve his doubts, just to convince him "do not be unbelieving, but believe," makes the most definitive confession possible: "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:27–28).
- The community of believers is the body of Christ. So in a sense when Jesus invites us to put our hands in his wounds, he is asking us to probe the wounds of the community. We are asked to make our wounded brothers and sisters whole, as Christ's wounded body was made whole.

Question of the Week

What wounds in my community can I help make whole? How will I do this?

Prayer of the Faithful:

We bring our needs and the needs of our sisters and brothers before the Lord, trusting in the One who raised Jesus from the dead.

- For the Church, that we may boldly proclaim our faith in the risen Christ to those, like Thomas, who have not seen and are reluctant to believe, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- That the risen Lord's gift of peace to his disciples may inspire us to pursue peace as an alternative to war, conflict, and discord, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For all who are ill in body, mind, or spirit, that they may find comfort, healing, and compassion in the Lord's shadow, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For the newly initiated members of the Church, that they may ever grow in faith, hope, and love in the Lord and express those virtues in living out the gospel, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For our faith community, that we may be instruments of God's mercy, bringing forgiveness and reconciliation to those who have turned away, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For what else should we pray? Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all the prayers that we hold this day in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Glorious God, your Son incarnated divine mercy here on earth and it is active still. Help us to extend that mercy to those who hurt us, to those who suffer, and to all those in need of it as you grant the prayers we make through Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord and Savior.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer: p.

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Rite of Peace:

The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ's presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Communion:

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that our reception of this paschal Sacrament may have a continuing effect in our minds and hearts.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Concluding Rite:

Final Blessing:

May the Lord bless us, ✠ protect us from all evil and lead us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Go in peace! **Thanks be to God.**