Divine Mercy Sunday | April 11, 2021

SAINT JOAN of ARC NEWS

The members of St. Joan of Arc Parish are disciples of Jesus Christ, who recognize God's love for the world & are empowered by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel to all people through joyful worship, life-long education, compassionate service, responsible stewardship, & active community living.

~ Mission Statement - Pentecost 1998 ~

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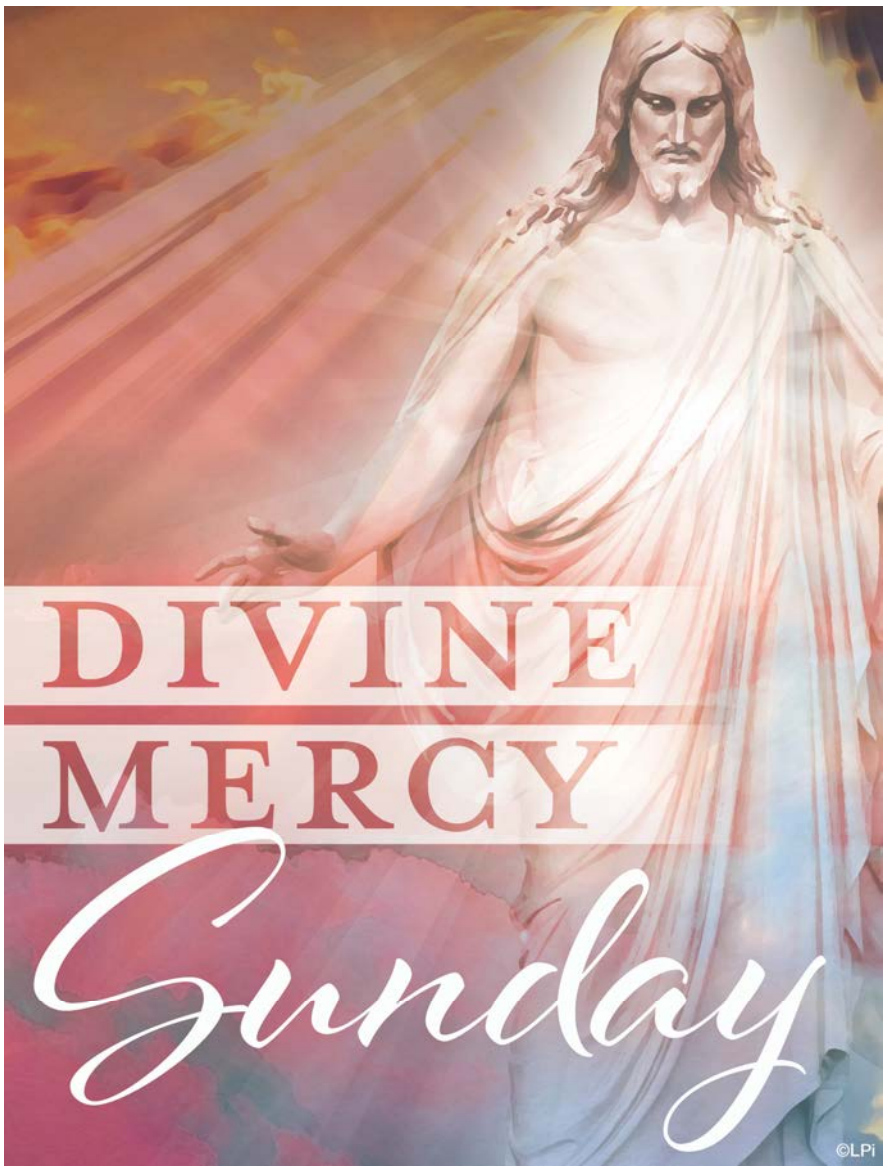

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Parish Directory / Liturgy Schedule

ST. JOAN OF ARC DIRECTORY

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LITURGY SCHEDULE

Weekdays
Monday thru Friday: 7:00 am

Weekends
Saturday: 4:00 pm & 6:00 pm

Sunday: 8:00 am, 10:00 am & 12:00 pm

Holy Day Masses
Vigil Mass: (evening prior) 7:00 pm

7:00 am, 12:00 pm, 7:00 pm

Reconciliation
Saturdays ~ 11:00am—12:00pm in the Sister Carol Center (adjacent to church)

Holy Hour
Thursdays in Church at 7:00 pm

Rosary
Monday - Friday after the 7a mass outside by the Holy Trinity statue.

PARISH CENTER OFFICE HOURS

The Parish Center is open Monday—Thursday from 8:30am-5pm and Friday from 8:30-4pm.

MASKS ARE MANDATORY WITHOUT EXCEPTION

For mass intentions or any service we may be reached at 586-777-3670 during these hours.

For any urgent needs when we are not open, please call our after-hours emergency number: 586-777-1342.

Baptisms: Please go to our website (stjoan.church) and fill out the Baptism request form.

Marriages: Arrangements should be made at the Parish Center at least six months prior to the desired date. Pre-marriage series required.

Registration: It is very important that every family and independent adult be registered in the Church in order to keep our records and mailings current. Please contact the Parish Office to register at your earliest opportunity.

RCIA: Please call the Parish Center (586-777-3670).

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A PARISHIONER?

If you would like to become a parishioner of St. Joan of Arc, at this time please register at stjoan.church and we will contact you by phone to get further information OR by calling us at 586-777-3670 during office hours.

Live Streamed Broadcasts at St. Joan of Arc

Though we have returned to public masses we will continue our Live Stream Broadcasts of all celebrations.

- **Weekdays -7 am Mass - (Monday thru Friday)**
- **Saturdays - 4 pm and 6 pm Masses**
- **Sundays - 8 am, 10 am & 12 pm Masses**
- **Thursdays - 7 pm Holy Hour**

Go to: livestream.stjoan.church to watch all live streaming and to view archived celebrations.

TALLer Tales

Some Things Never Change: Our family usually celebrates Easter on Palm Sunday. We've done this for years so family members can celebrate Easter with the in-laws or other family members on the day itself. Our Palm Sunday gathering this year was small because a few were quarantined because of exposure to COVID.

As plans for the day were evolving, my mom decided she would do an Easter Egg Hunt for the under 30 crowd. My dad was in charge of the annual Easter Egg Hunt for the grandkids when they were younger, so my mom thought it would be nice to do this in his honor, especially this year. The over 30 crowd was allowed to participate but only by being the designated "proxy" for someone who wasn't able to come. More on that later.

My dad had this elaborate system for hiding his Easter eggs. They would be placed both inside and outside and in some very clever spots. Over the years, my dad learned to create a map of his treasures simply because one or two would go missing, and he wouldn't be able to remember where he placed them. He then graduated to numbered eggs with an elaborate map with all of their locations; this way the missing eggs could easily be found. Before he created his numbering system, there were a few years where hidden eggs would show up in the summer or fall. I'm sure we're not the only family who has these troubles! Could you imagine if we "hid" Christmas Gifts all over the house at Christmas time!

Ironically, I was sorting through some of the digital files I created from our family videos over the years and stumbled upon a family Easter Egg Hunt of 1994 at the condo. The 8-minute video showed the excited little ones looking for Easter eggs in the condo basement and a very perplexed grandpa trying to figure out where that one missing egg was located. I had fun watching this as we prepared for the Easter Egg Hunt of 2021. I planned to show the family this video clip after we concluded the 2021 Easter Egg Hunt.

Back to Palm Sunday weekend. My mom and sister Jackie spent Saturday night of Palm Sunday weekend at the condo. They got the condo ready for the family gathering, but more importantly, they prepared and hid the eggs all over the condo. Not knowing what the weather would be like on Palm Sunday, they decided this would only be an indoor Easter Egg Hunt and only on the condo's main floor.

Considering this was an Easter Egg Hunt for the under 30 crowd, eggs filled with just candy and stuff would have been nice, but my mom decided to up the ante a bit. She decided that one of the eggs would have a $100 bill, and each of them would not only have the usual jelly beans and Easter candy but a $2 lottery ticket too! So there was now a real incentive to be a bit more diligent in finding eggs. The only other rule was that you were limited to four eggs and that you had to hold off on opening the eggs until everyone was gathered back in the kitchen. This wasn't your typical Easter Egg Hunt then.

Once the green light was given, the hunt was on. For those joining by Zoom, they offered instructions to their proxy on where to look too. Someone found a Golden Egg and was quite excited, thinking they just cashed in on the hidden $100 bill. Mom just smiled.

In the end, we had trouble finding one missing egg. Mom gave clues, but her clues weren't working too well because we couldn't find anything in those locations. My sister Jackie then started trying to account for all the eggs. They were all numbered, but Jackie couldn't find the sheet which showed all the locations, and she was getting pretty frustrated because history was repeating itself, but now it was her problem to figure this all out!

In the end, the golden egg didn't have the $100 (my mom had fun messing with us on that one), and a few of the lottery tickets were small winners. Everyone had a grand time; we especially enjoyed the fact one egg went missing for some time … but was eventually found!

We then watched the video clip from 1997 and had a few good laughs, especially watching a perplexed grandpa trying to find that one missing egg. One year we might get it right … but then again, some things NEVER change! That's what makes family traditions … and lots of laughs too!

Easter THANKS! It was another odd Easter, but at least this year, we had people in Church! And, I'm grateful the crowds were big at all of our masses. I continue to be thankful for all the beautiful ways God's grace and light have shone and continue to shine forth during the pandemic.

I'm extremely grateful to our official "COVID-19 Church Team" who helped so much behind the scenes to make everything happen in Church for Holy Week and Easter. Thanks go to Sandy and Pat Markielewicz for all the Palm Sunday decorations. The beautiful woven palm creations helped set the tone and helped our entry into Holy Week.

Thanks to Father Rich, Father Andrew, Dina Ciaffone, Pat and Sandy Markielewicz, Mary Garofalo, Vern Dave, Greg Ruvolo, Anne Melise, and Ilona Higgins, who helped decorate the huge cross and get all the Easter flowers into place. Thanks to Kristine Hass, and the entire Hass Family, who have been the producers and real power behind all the streaming that takes place, along with all the slides with the lyrics and text of the mass parts that were up on the screen or broadcasted online. Getting all of this ready is no easy task!

Thanks to Catherine Thomas, Kristine Hass, Eleonore Ellero, and Ted Devine for all the beautiful music. I loved the combination of traditional hymns with some very prayerful contemporary songs. Simply put, our liturgies were beautiful, prayerful, and indeed honored Christ as we celebrated the great mysteries of His death and resurrection. God is good!

The crowds, both in-person and online, were impressive too. Our largest in-person mass was the Noon Mass on Easter Sunday. We had about 400 people in Church and close to 200 unique views online. With the 5 Easter masses only (Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday), we had approximately 1,300 people in Church and about 1,500 unique views online. Pretty impressive numbers for our COVID-19 world!

It was a beautiful and prayerful Holy Week. THANK YOU!

Enjoy the week. Know of my prayers.

In Christ,

gmb
gmb@sjascs.org

St. Joan of Arc

Online Giving

Manage your Online Giving account with the app!

Download the Online Giving app today at **OLGApp.com**

Donations

Payments

Give online at stjoan.church *or* from the app

REGISTER THE APP WITH OUR ORGANIZATION ID#

4719

ANDROID APP ON Google play

Download on the App Store

SJA Health Ministry

April is National Cancer Control Month

"This month is dedicated to raising awareness for cancer prevention and treatment throughout the US. For many years, the death tolls from cancer have steadily declined, due in part to better education and heightened awareness about how to prevent certain types of cancer, recognize the signs and symptoms of cancer, and how to seek proper treatment".

Prevention: Among the many methods of prevention, **screening** is one of the most effective ways to detect pre-cancerous cells and provide early treatment".

- **Breast Cancer:** Monthly breast self-exam (BSE) and yearly mammograms for women ages 40 and older. Earlier with family history.
- **Cervical Cancer:** Women ages 21 -65, includes Papanicolaou (Pap) tests at least every 3 years.
- **Lung:** Men and women, 55-75, high risk (currently smoking, or over past 15 years)
- **Colon and Rectal Cancer:** Yearly colonoscopies for men and women age 50 -75.
- **Prostate:** Men, age 50, PSA blood test with/without rectal exam

Vaccinations: FDA approved, available to help treat and prevent certain types of cancers; work to prevent specific infectious agents that cause or contribute to the development of cancer.:

- **Hepatitis B Vaccine:** Three-shot series given to children is designed to protect both men and women against the Hepatitis B virus, which can cause **liver cancer**.
- **Provenge:** approved by FDA in 2010, this vaccine helps to treat **metastatic prostate cancer**.

Resources: www.cancersmoc.com/april-is-national-cancer-control-month/
www.cancer.org/healthy/find-cancer-early/cancer-screening-guidelines/american-cancer-society-guidelines-for-the-early-detection-of-cancer.

Spend an hour with me.
-Jesus
HOLY HOURS
7-8 pm, Thursdays in the Church
and streaming live online at stjoan.church and on Facebook @sjascs
First and third Thursdays include Praise and Worship music, second and fourth are silent.

Weekly Calendar of Events

Monday, April 12th

7:00 am Morning Mass - Live Streamed

Tuesday, April 13th

7:00 am Morning Mass - Live Streamed

8:30 am School Mass (5th –8th Gds) Live Streamed

Wednesday, April 14th

7:00 am Morning Mass - Live Streamed

8:30 am School Mass (1st –4th Gds) Live Streamed

Thursday, April 15th

7:00 am Morning Mass - Live Streamed

7:00 pm Holy Hour - Live Streamed

Friday, April 16th

7:00 am Morning Mass - Live Streamed

3:30 pm Fortunate/Monahan Wedding

Saturday, April 17th

11:00 am Reconciliation

12:30 pm Baptism of Violet Seaver

1:30 pm Baptism of Victoria Panzenhagen

4:00 pm Sunday Mass - Live Streamed

6:00 pm Sunday Mass - Live Streamed.

Sunday, April 18th

8:00 am Sunday Mass - Live Streamed

10:00 am Sunday Mass - Live Streamed

12:00 pm Sunday Mass -Live Streamed

Words on the Word

April 11, 2021 – Trending Now

Is it a trend, we sometimes find ourselves asking about interesting anecdotes, or just a little blip on the radar?

Well, if Google searches are a reliable indicator, here's something that's a trend:

Searches on the terms "hope," "hug," and "prayer" are up considerably over the last year, while searches on terms such as "party," "travel visa" and "festival" dropped to record lows.

That information comes courtesy of a news site out of Ireland that reported recently on the types of terms that had gained and lost popularity on the international search engine during the pandemic.

None of them are a particular surprise, given the way in which many people have altered their priorities since last year. Some of that, of course, is due to necessity – foreign travel dropped precipitously, for example – and some is due to people re-assessing what is most important in a changing world.

The good news for all of us, as we observe Divine Mercy Sunday, is the reminder that, while trends come and go, one thing remains constant through the ages – God's infinite love and mercy.

And so whether we're able to hug our loved ones at the moment or not ... whether we're able to relax with friends at a party or festival or not ... or some combination of such things, we can rest assured that by keeping the faith we will win the day.

"For the love of God is this, that we keep his commandments," we hear in today's second reading from the first letter of St. John. "And his commandments are not burdensome, for whoever is begotten by God conquers the world. And the victory that conquers the world is our faith. Who indeed is the victor over the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"

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Mass Intentions /Weekly Readings

Mass Intentions

Monday April 12, 2021 Easter Weekday (White)

7:00 a.m. Brad Shuder and Cornelius B. Thelen

Tuesday April 13, 2021 Easter Weekday, Saint Martin 1, Pope and Martyr (White/Red)

7:00 a.m. George Bugarin and a Special Intention for Dolores Fikany

Wednesday April 14, 2021 Easter Weekday (White)

7:00 a.m. Kevin Nagy and Edmund Black

Thursday April 15, 2021 Easter Weekday (White)

7:00 a.m. Dorothy Guiglardo

Friday April 16, 2021 Easter Weekday (White)

7:00 a.m. Gladys Langlois and Mary and Frank Fleming

Saturday April 17, 2021 Easter Weekday (White)

4:00 p.m. Edward and Henry Blind, Bonnie Batchee, the deceased members of the Walsh Family, Fran Socha, and Special Intentions for the J. Champine Family, the Thomas Family and the Olivieri Family

6:00 p.m. Joan Weber

Sunday April 18, 2021 Third Sunday of Easter (White)

8:00 a.m. For the Intentions of St. Joan of Arc Parishioners

10:00 a.m. Edith Roman

12:00 p.m. Esmenia Salomon Silva, Daniel Cimini, Lou Mascia, Evelyn Smith, Marguerite Joseph, Patricia McCarron Rayha, Fran Socha, the deceased members of the Stella Urso Family, and a Special Intention for Mr. & Mrs. McCarthy

Weekly Readings

Monday, April 12

Acts 4:23-31
John 3:1-8

Tuesday, April 13

Acts 4:32-37
John 3:7b-15

Wednesday, April 14

Acts 5:17-26
John 3:16-21

Thursday, April 15

Acts 5:27-33
John 3:31-36

Friday, April 16

Acts 5:34-42
John 6:1-15

Saturday, April 17

Acts 6:1-7
John 6:16-21

Sunday, April 18

Acts 3:13-15, 17-19
1 John 2:1-5a
Luke 24:35-48

I Am The Resurrection & The Life

"Heavenly Father, welcome home those who you have called from this world and grant peace and consolation to their families."

Elena Roose
Fr. Tim Mazur
Angelo G. and Virginia Caprara

"I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year: Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown. and he replied: Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light, and safer than a known way."

~Minnie Louise Haskins

Tire Tracks in the d'Arc

VeggieTales: On Monday I was at the grocery store and I saw a stand of vegetable seeds. I'm not much of a gardener, but I've grown a few vegetables before, and in the spirit of anything I can find remotely connected with Spring, I decided it was definitely a good idea—I needed to plant seeds and grow vegetables.

My parents used to grow a lot of potatoes and carrots and my mom always had tomatoes in the greenhouse (or ripening on my bedroom window ledge!) I like having cucumbers in the summer months—there's something about my Englishness that makes cucumber sandwiches make me think of summer tennis and cricket matches. So cucumbers it was. For once, I read the instructions and it cautioned against planting before the risk of frost is gone, so I waited and have not planted them yet. I'll keep you posted on their progress once I do, provided the squirrels don't get them first.

There is something really neat about growing your own food. Some friends and I were talking about that when Covid first hit and everyone was panic-buying the stores into empty shelves. But there's something beautiful about the patience it takes, putting these seeds in the ground and allowing nature to take its course, seeing those first tiny shoots appear, still so far away from being what they will become and from producing what you're hoping for. It's a mysterious process that somehow those seeds "know" when the time and conditions are right for them to kick into action. What an amazing world God has given us.

We had a small vegetable garden at Camp Sancta Maria when I worked there. Inevitably, by the time the campers arrived for the summer, it was already too late for what they planted to produce much before they left camp. All the same, it was a good lesson in patience and responsibility — in the idea that often it's not we who reap the fruits of our labor, but others, but that doesn't mean it's not worth the work. In this case, it was me who usually benefitted from their work! I was always the last one to leave for the winter, sometime in late-October. By then, I had been well-fed with lettuce, carrots and cucumbers, picked from that garden. One Spring I arrived in early April, well before the camp cook arrived and with no food at camp. I was hungry so I went over to the dead-looking garden and dug-up some of the carrots from the previous year. I'd been told that if the carrots remain in the ground over the winter, they freeze and thaw in the Spring and are actually become sweeter to the taste. I just brushed-off the dirt and I'm not sure they were sweeter, but they were fine…. if a little gritty!

A few years ago, when I was in the seminary, I was assigned to a parish in North Branch for the summer. I decided I would grow cucumbers there, too. It was a little later than ideal, but still, I had great hopes for my little patch! It wasn't the ideal spot either… too shady really, but I planted and hoped. My mistake was not marking the spot. There was a gardener who tended to the plants a couple of days a week and the day after I planted the seeds, I found foot-prints all over the spot as she had walked there reaching to water other plants. The soil was compacted and it wasn't looking good. Nothing appeared through the soil for the longest time, even though I watered it religiously. Then one day, the tiniest little shoot heroically pushed its way though the surface! I nurture that shoot, lifted it's head up above the soil, trying to stop it curling back into the ground, until it was big enough to reach for the sun itself. By the end of the summer, I had a few shoots, a few inches high, but my assignment was over and I left the parish and returned to my studies at the seminary. Sometime in September, to my delight, the pastor texted me a photo. It was the one little cucumber my patch had produced. I didn't taste the fruit of my labor, but he did and I felt vindicated that all my efforts had not been in vain. Against all the odds, my plants had produced! And I'd learned something - plant the seeds and mark the spot!!

This year, I just hope the squirrels can't read!

Divine Mercy: This Sunday is Divine Mercy Sunday. Pope John Paul announced in the year 2000 that the second Sunday after Easter would forever more be celebrated as Divine Mercy Sunday, marking the visions of Christ received in the 1930s by St. Faustina Kowalska, the Polish mystic. Holy Father said about all this at St. Faustina's tomb in Lagiewniki, Poland, in 1997:

"There is nothing that man needs more than Divine Mercy—that love which is benevolent, which is compassionate, which raises man above his weakness to the infinite heights of the holiness of God.

"In this place we become particularly aware of this. From here, in fact, went out the Message of Divine Mercy that Christ Himself chose to pass on to our generation through Blessed Faustina.

"And it is a message that is clear and understandable for everyone. Anyone can come here, look at this image of the merciful Jesus, His Heart radiating grace, and hear in the depths of his own soul what Blessed Faustina heard: *"Fear nothing. I am with you always"* (Diary, 586).

"And if this person responds with a sincere heart: *"Jesus, I trust in you,"* he will find comfort in all his anxieties and fears...."

A week after Easter Sunday, and a week into our 50 day season of Easter, hopefully we are all more aware of the immensity of God's Divine Mercy, demonstrated to us in an unequivocable manner through the Cross and the Resurrection of Jesus. During these 50 days, our first reading at mass comes from the Acts of the Apostles. It's the acts… it's what the Apostles and disciples of Jesus did, having become aware of the incredible mercy of Jesus. They went out and continued to be deliverers of that mercy to others. They continued the mission. They continued the work of Jesus. They did not always reap the fruits of their labor in their own time. But their efforts at planting seeds and nurturing the growth of the faith continues to benefit us today. They would never know us, but they cared enough to ensure we had the means to know Jesus. Now it's our turn. The next generations depend on us. Will we answer the call?

You are in my prayers this week.
Fr. Andrew adawson@sjascs.org

An Act of Spiritual Communion

It has long been a Catholic understanding that when circumstances prevent one from receiving Holy Communion, it is possible to make an Act of Spiritual Communion which is a source of grace.

Spiritual Communion means uniting one's self in prayer with Christ's sacrifice and worshipping him in his Body and Blood. The most common reason for making an Act of Spiritual Communion is when a person cannot attend Mass.

Acts of Spiritual Communion increase our desire to receive sacramental Communion and help us avoid the sins that would make us unable to receive Holy Communion worthily.

A Prayer for Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that you are present
in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love you above all things and I desire to receive you in my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally,
Come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace you as if you were already there
And unite myself wholly to you.
Never permit me to be separated from you.

Amen.

St. Joan of Arc

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER – APRIL 18, 2021 B

Reading 1 – Acts of the Apostles

Peter said to the people: "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and denied in Pilate's presence when he had decided to release him. You denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. The author of life you put to death, but God raised him from the dead; of this we are witnesses. Now I know, brothers, that you acted out of ignorance, just as your leaders did; but God has thus brought to fulfillment what he had announced beforehand through the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer. Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be wiped away."

Responsorial Psalm 4

R. Lord, let your face shine on us.
When I call, answer me, O my just God, you who relieve me when I am in distress; have pity on me, and hear my prayer!
R. Lord, let your face shine on us.
Know that the LORD does wonders for his faithful one; the LORD will hear me when I call upon him.
R. Lord, let your face shine on us.
O LORD, let the light of your countenance shine upon us! You put gladness into my heart.
R. Lord, let your face shine on us.
As soon as I lie down, I fall peacefully asleep, for you alone, O LORD, bring security to my dwelling.
R. Lord, let your face shine on us.

Reading 2 – 1 John

My children, I am writing this to you so that you may not commit sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one. He is expiation for our sins, and not for our sins only but for those of the whole world. The way we may be sure that we know him is to keep his commandments. Those who say, "I know him," but do not keep his commandments are liars, and the truth is not in them. But whoever keeps his word, the love of God is truly perfected in him.

Alleluia

Alleluia, alleluia.
Lord Jesus, open the Scriptures to us; make our hearts burn while you speak to us.
Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel – Luke

The two disciples recounted what had taken place on the way, and how Jesus was made known to them in the breaking of bread.

While they were still speaking about this, he stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." But they were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost. Then he said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do questions arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have." And as he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While they were still incredulous for joy and were amazed, he asked them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of baked fish; he took it and ate it in front of them.

He said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. And he said to them, "Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."

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April 11, 2021

Sunday of Divine Mercy

Written by THE FAITHFUL DISCIPLE

Acts 4:32-35 | 1 Jn 5:1-6 | Jn 20:19-31

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

Do you ever have times – at the dinner table or at a gathering of friends – where all seems right with the world? I often hold my breath, conscious of the fragility of those moments, fearful that saying something might jinx things. It's a little like rooting for a pitcher cruising into the bottom of the ninth with a no-hitter – that feeling that we are on the verge of perfection. Well, as Christians, we are on that verge, although perfection will not come in this life but the next. And so, as fleeting as these human moments feel, and can actually be, we are reminded in today's psalm: "Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting ... Let those who fear the Lord say, 'His mercy endures forever.'" As we celebrate this Divine Mercy Sunday, and enter the second week of Easter, let us give thanks for the gift of God's great mercy, and pray for the grace to be as loving and merciful to others.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

I'm taken by the story of doubting Thomas. For a long time I've focused on the "doubting" part of his name, the fact that he demanded to place his fingers in the nail marks and his hand in Jesus' side. However, when Jesus addresses Thomas, Thomas' response is immediate and unqualified: "My Lord and my God!" Thomas has recognized the divine nature of Jesus; he sees him not just as the man he has followed, but as God. As Catholics, we may sometimes face questions about how the Church has come to believe and teach certain things. Thomas' ultimate affirmation encourages us to be steadfast in our faith, and to be patient with any of our own and others' questions. That is because Christ will come to meet us where we are. As the Incarnation of God's divine mercy, Jesus Christ is the one who hears our doubts and insecurities, and he answers them: "Here I am. Look at me. Touch me. Feel my presence." Thomas was not afraid, and we need not fear either. God's mercy is upon us, "and the victory that conquers the world is our faith." Let us witness to our faith as Thomas did to his.

PRAY Today is Divine Mercy Sunday, a day when we are reminded of God's immense love and mercy for us. Learn more about this day and how to recite the Divine Mercy Chaplet: usccb.org/prolife/divine-mercy-sunday.

GOSPEL MEDITATION
ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

What a wonderful joy fills us today as we ponder the inexhaustible mercy of God. "Mercy is the heart of God," Pope Francis tells us. The image of a heart has been used to point to the very life source of a person as it is the organ that allows life to flow through our veins and sustain us. Mercy is the heart of God. Imagine this dynamic, powerful, compassionate, piercing, embracing, loving, propelling, penetrating, absorbing, and enveloping, transforming presence of God flowing into the very depth of our souls. It is God's mercy that allows blood to flow through our veins. It is God's mercy that forms every atom of our being and leads us to what is true. God's mercy reveals all superficiality and falsehood, and lays bare all distortions, empty promises, weakness, and sin.

"Mercy is the force that reawakens us to new life and instills in us the courage to look to the future with hope," Pope Francis continues. God's all forgiving, compassionate love is with us. When we finally believe and accept that Christ's resurrected transfigured presence resides with us, we then find within us a strong confidence to accept life's imperfections and disappointments and move on. Every day is a new adventure in new life. God leaves the past behind and opens doors to the future. It doesn't matter how many mistakes we made yesterday. All that matters is what we do tomorrow and what we learn along the way. It is so easy to remain tethered and mired in the past, but there is no need to do so. God is all about tomorrow and the work God has yet to do in our lives.

Mercy gives birth to hope. Hope for the greatest of sinners and hope for the worst of disasters. There is nothing God cannot do and nothing God cannot fashion. After all, everything we know and treasure was once nothing, and look what God did with the nothing God had! The resurrected Christ stands before us with nail marks in his wrists and wounds on his body as a testament that not even injustice, suffering and death can trample over and destroy God's mercy. What have we to fear? Why do we keep ourselves from peace? Our lack of faith prevents us from going forward and fully receiving the holiness God desires to breathe upon us. Breathe in God's mercy, allow the wind of God's presence to kiss all of your sins and caress all of your fears. Exhale peace.

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."
- Jn 20:28-29

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Divine Mercy Sunday

Second Sunday of Easter

"Jesus told Sr Faustina: 'Humanity will not find peace until it turns trustfully to divine mercy' (Diary, p. 132). . . It is not a new message but can be considered a gift of special enlightenment that helps us to relive the Gospel of Easter more intensely, to offer it as a ray of light to the men and women of our time." —St. John Paul II, Divine Mercy Sunday, 2000

In 1931, Jesus appeared to Sr. Faustina in Poland and expressed his desire for a feast celebrating his mercy. The Feast of Mercy was to be on the Sunday after Easter and was to include a public blessing and liturgical veneration of His image with the inscription "Jesus, I trust in You." All priests were to proclaim God's great mercy on this day.

This promise of mercy has been affirmed by the Church, which has made Divine Mercy Sunday an occasion for receiving a plenary indulgence, "the remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sin whose guilt has already been forgiven" (CCC, no. 1471). The plenary indulgence is granted to the faithful under the usual conditions (Confession, Eucharist, prayer for the intentions of the pope, and complete detachment from sin, even venial sin). The faithful may either take part in the prayers and devotions held in honor of Divine Mercy in any church or chapel or recite the Our Father and Creed in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed or reserved in the tabernacle, adding a devout prayer to the merciful Lord Jesus.

The Easter Season

Easter isn't just a day, it's a whole season and stretches all the way to the feast of Pentecost.

At masses all through the Easter season, our usual practice of reading from the Old Testament is replaced be reading from the Acts of the Apostles. These readings 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.

All of this should be an encouragement and a sign of hope for us today. Despite war, violence, personal struggles, and an under-performing economy, God has not abandoned us, nor left us to our own devices. The risen savior is still with us. These 50 days of Easter ask us to reflect on his presence, and—even in the face of danger or fear—to live with joy.

Catholic Current

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Pray for the Sick List: Please note that we regularly clear the "Pray for the Sick List" because the list grows beyond our space allocation and we don't always hear from people when they've gotten better. If you would like to add a person please call the Parish Center front desk at 586.777.3670 or send an email to our general inbox at info@sjascs.org.

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Bringing Home the Word

Second Sunday of Easter (Sunday of Divine Mercy) (B)
April 11, 2021

Leaning Upon God

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The Embrace, a painting by Pedro Cano, is a powerful image of paternal love and union. It recalls the historic moment when St. John Paul II, at the Mass of his elevation to the papacy, embraced his lifelong mentor, Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński. The painting is a moment frozen in time that represents something much bigger than the event that inspired it.

The two figures are barely distinguishable. They seem to be fused, like two figures carved out of one piece of marble. It is the mutual love of giving and receiving that makes this exchange so moving. Indeed, it reminds us of the embrace of love we seek in this life from our loved ones as well as in eternal life. There is no distance between them, rancor, or questioning—only the total happiness of being united with a friend.

The pope's strong, broad shoulders are penetrated by the grasping hands of the one embraced. There is a clenching need to find security in the other. We all search for love, forgiveness, and for strength we do not find in ourselves. We wish our faith were stronger but, the truth is, we need to be constantly turning to God for his mercy.

Yet, he is pleased to be our rock upon which we lean, the one we can touch in our doubt. Turn to him in need, for he is happy to save you from the trials of this life. He wants to be the risen one who restores our faith. He rejoices that we need him and return to him. +

Sunday Readings

Acts 4:32-35

With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all.

1 John 5:1-6

Whoever is begotten by God conquers the world. And the victory that conquers the world is our faith.

John 20:19-31

[Jesus said,] "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

We wish our faith were stronger but, the truth is, we need to be constantly turning to God for his mercy.

A Word from Pope Francis

[The disciples] had abandoned the Lord at his passion and felt guilty. But meeting them, Jesus did not give a long sermon. To them, who were wounded within, he shows his own wounds. Thomas can now touch them and know of Jesus' love and how much Jesus had suffered for him, even though he had abandoned him.

—Divine Mercy Sunday, April 19, 2020

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Do I find security in the love of another in a healthy way? Is it the fruit of giving and not possessing?
- Is my strongest foundation in the love and mercy of Jesus?

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A Parable of Mercy

By Johan van Parys

When my grandmother died, I inherited her personal papers. Though I was hesitant to go through them, I was soon immersed as stories that had been relayed only through whispers or hints became abundantly clear.

No matter what we've done, we can and should ask our merciful God for forgiveness and help.

The most amazing story concerned my grandparents' plight during World War II. In the late 1930s, my grandmother inherited her family's shoe business. Her biggest client was the Belgian army. When the Nazis took over Belgium, they ordered her to make shoes for them. She refused, so they closed her factory and sent her employees and my grandfather to work camps in Germany. Nazi officers took over the family home, and my grandmother and great-grandmother were made to serve them.

The story was illuminated by two sets of letters. The first set, tied with a red ribbon, was written by my grandfather to my grandmother from the work camp. Most of the letters are filled with small anecdotes of camp life, nothing incriminating because the letters were scrutinized by the Nazis before being mailed. He also thanks my grandmother for the occasional package of soap or chocolates and for news from home. His letters are all very strong and full of words of encouragement. The most moving among all of them is the letter written in response to the birth of his youngest daughter a few months after he was sent to the camps. He writes about how he longs to return home and wishes he could hold her.

After the war, my grandfather came home, and the Nazi officers returned to Germany. The second set of letters, tied with a blue ribbon, was written by one of the officers who had occupied my grandparents' home. In the first letter, the former Nazi officer apologizes and asks forgiveness. In ensuing letters he speaks about his two sons who were killed in the war, the destruction of their hometown, and the absolute poverty he and his wife live in. Then he starts asking my grandparents for clothes, shoes, and food. In other letters, he thanks my grandparents for sending them whatever they needed.

In 1967 my aunt got married. Though I was very young, I do remember an unknown couple at my grandparents' home. I didn't understand their language, but I liked their accordion playing. I deduced from the letters that this was the former Nazi officer and his wife.

I was incredulous. I couldn't comprehend how he dared ask forgiveness after all he'd done to my family. Even worse, how could he ask my grandparents for help? I also didn't understand how my grandparents could forgive him, help him, and invite him into their home.

I've given much thought to this amazing story of sin and sorrow that led to forgiveness and reconciliation. It's a true parable of God's forgiveness and mercy and of the mercy and forgiveness God requires of us. No matter what we've done, we can and should ask our merciful God for forgiveness and help. And regardless of what has been done to us or what we've done to others, we can and must ask for forgiveness—and give it in return. +

PRAYER

Risen Lord, you fulfilled your promise by rising from the dead. Help me to practice what I preach.

From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeny

WEEKDAY READINGS

April 12-17

Monday, *Easter Weekday:*
Acts 4:23–31 / Jn 3:1–8

Tuesday, *Easter Weekday:*
Acts 4:32–37 / Jn 3:7b–15

Wednesday, *Easter Weekday:*
Acts 5:17–26 / Jn 3:16–21

Thursday, *Easter Weekday*:
Acts 5:27–33 / Jn 3:31–36

Friday, *Easter Weekday*:
Acts 5:34–42 / Jn 6:1–15

Saturday, *Easter Weekday:*
Acts 6:1–7 / Jn 6:16–21

Bringing Home the Word
April 11, 2021

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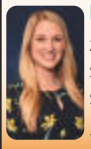
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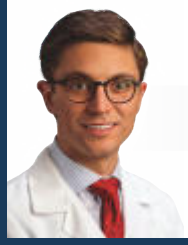
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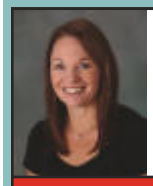
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