CELEBRATION OF THE WORD

Second Sunday of Easter

This is a celebration of the Word to aid your worship this Sunday, alone or with family. If possible, place a simple cross or crucifix prominently in the room and light one or more candles. You can also place an image of the Virgin Mary there if possible. As a family, choose the one who leads the prayer, and someone to do the readings.

Whoever leads the prayer can say:

On this Divine Mercy Sunday we recall the words of Saint Thomas Aquinas: "mercy consists in bringing a thing out of non-being into being." We see this transpire concretely in the life of the early Church. The believers "devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of bread and to prayers." They were filled with awe; they were witnesses of wondrous signs; they lived for the good of the other; they were selfless and generous; they overflowed with "exultation and sincerity of heart." God "in his great mercy" gave them—and us—"a new birth to a living hope" through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. That is what the Apostle Thomas is looking for in the Lord's open side. Today, in the midst of our fears and the feeling that we are locked in, prevented from our normal routines and even from our usual practices of the faith, we are confident that the Lord can break through any barrier and reach us with his grace.

Sign of the Cross

After a moment of silence, let everyone begin by making the Sign of the Cross:

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

Hymn

Choose an appropriate hymn.

We place ourselves before the Lord, beginning with an act of contrition:

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

The following are the readings of the 2nd Sunday of Easter.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles **2:42-47**

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart,

praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.
The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 118

℟ (1) **Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.**

Or: Alleluia.

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." ℟

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. ℟

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. ℟

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Peter 1:3-9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time. In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.
The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Alleluia, alleluia. You believe in me, Thomas, because you have seen me, says the Lord;/ blessed are they who have not seen me, but still believe! **Alleluia, alleluia.**

Eight days later Jesus came and stood in their midst.

A reading from
the holy Gospel according to John **20:19-31**

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.

Allow for a few minutes of silence and meditation. In a family, the leader could offer some words of consolation at this moment, such as: "Jesus, we trust in you. We confide everything to your abundant mercy. Remove from our minds all doubt and fear, and help us to see in your wounds the answer to our own wounds. Help us to see in your sufferings the redemption of our own sufferings. Help us to see in your glorious and resurrected body the promise that we, too, will share in your victory over death. Jesus, we trust in you. Mary, mother of mercy, pray for us."

MEDITATION OF THE DAY

A Feast of Mercy

In the evening, when I was in my cell, I saw the Lord Jesus clothed in a white garment. One hand [was] raised in the gesture of blessing, the other was touching the garment at the breast. From beneath the garment, slightly drawn aside at the breast, there were emanating two large rays, one red, the other pale. In silence I kept my gaze fixed on the Lord; my soul was struck with awe, but also with great joy. After a while, Jesus said to

me, "Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: Jesus, I trust in you. I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel, and [then] throughout the world. I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over [its] enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I myself will defend it as my own glory."

When I told this to my confessor, I received this for a reply: "That refers to your soul." He told me, "Certainly, paint God's image in your soul." When I came out of the confessional, I again heard words such as these: "My image already is in your soul. I desire that there be a Feast of Mercy. I want this image, which you will paint with a brush, to be solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter; that Sunday is to be the Feast of Mercy. I desire that priests proclaim this great mercy of mine towards souls of sinners. Let the sinner not be afraid to approach me. The flames of mercy are burning me—clamoring to be spent; I want to pour them out upon these souls."

Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska

Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska († 1938) was a Polish Sister of Our Lady of Mercy. She was canonized in 2000.

Intercessions

The leader can begin with these words:

We give thanks to the Lord because he is good. United in the joy of the Resurrection, let us turn to the Father with our prayers:

℟ Lord, hear our prayer.

That, on this Divine Mercy Sunday, the Church will rededicate herself to living and proclaiming Christ's mercy. We pray to the Lord. ℟

That leaders of governments will act with courage and wisdom in continuing to address the coronavirus pandemic. We pray to the Lord. ℟

For healthcare workers and those who are risking contagion and death to help others. We pray to the Lord. ℟

For those burdened by sin: that the grace of the Resurrection would move them to receive God's mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation as soon as they are able. We pray to the Lord. ℟

For those trapped in confusion or doubt: that they may be filled with the truth and the light of the risen Christ. We pray to the Lord. ℟

For the grace this week to face the trials and difficulties of life with the confidence and certainty that come from Christ's victory over death. We pray to the Lord. ℟

Personal intentions

Our Father….

An Act of Spiritual Communion:

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into 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.

May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and lead us to everlasting life. And may the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.

To conclude the celebration, you can sing or recite the following or another suitable hymn. Turn and face an image of Mary, if you have one.

Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia.
The Son whom you merited to bear, alleluia,
has risen as he said, alleluia.
Pray for us to God, alleluia.

℣ Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia!
℟ For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia!

Or:

Regina caeli, laetare, alleluia,
quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia,
resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia;
ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.

℣ *Gaude et laetare, Virgo Maria, alleluia.*

℟ *Quia surrexit Dominus vere, alleluia.*

MAGNIFICAT is now offering complimentary access to its iOS and Android Apps throughout May. To register for free access in English, visit www.magnificat.com/free.
For a reflection by Bishop Barron on this Sunday's Gospel, and for an extended lectio divina feature, please see our free online version or the app.