**Solidarity with Sisters’ Communal Prayer for April 11, 2021**

**Second Sunday of Easter - Divine Mercy Sunday**

*“Forgiveness: a grace too powerful to name.” (Nicole M. Perrone)*

**CHECK-IN** and then Betty mutes everyone. **(Suzie and Betty)**

**WELCOME (Suzie De Quattro)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Betty and I prepared today’s communal prayer.
* Thanks to Reggie Ott and Linda Donaldson for leading our music today.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Tim and Mia Brown, Maryann Dolan, Jim De Quattro, Lynn Bufka, Richard McGinnis, Mary Ott, Bill Fanelli, and Anne Regan.
* Our reflection questions will appear in Chat during our Sharing. Thank you for otherwise not using Chat until after our closing song.

**SETTLING IN (Betty Thompson)**

Let’s quiet ourselves so we can be attentive to what God hopes for us today. Notice your breath as it goes in and out…. Let it slow and deepen… and slowly fill you with the peace of Christ. We begin with 3 deep breaths. One to be here… one to be together… and one to welcome in the Spirit who never leaves us.

Now let us join Linda Donaldson in offering Glory and Praise to Our God.

**OPENING SONG Glory and Praise – Dan Schutte** **(Linda Donaldson)**

Refrain: Glory and praise to our God

Who alone gives light to our days  
Many are the blessings He bears  
To those who trust in His ways

We the daughters and sons of Him  
Who built the valleys and plains  
Praise the wonders our God has done  
In every heart that sings. Refrain

God has watered our barren land  
And spent His merciful rain  
Now our rivers of life run full  
For anyone to drink. Refrain

**GREETING (Suzie De Quattro)**

Let us rejoice, for Jesus Christ is risen! Alleluia! Alleluia!

All: Cbrist is risen indeed! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**CALL TO WORSHIP / GATHERING PRAYER**  **(Suzie De Quattro)**

We are here to continue moving deeper into the Easter light of Christ. Together we can make abundant light for the world.

Holy One, teach us how to live in your light every day and share it with others, especially with those who suffer in any kind of darkness.

O God, thank you for your gift of Easter peace.

Let your peace flow into us and through us as we put on your mind and your heart.

Teach our hearts mercy and forgiveness like yours.

Teach our minds creativity to build justice amid mercy.

May we inquire, nudge, and challenge each other

to imagine what none us could conceive alone.

Amen.

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Betty Thompson)**

Today with the entire Church we celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday. Today we also begin a series of Sundays when, over and over, Jesus tells us, “Peace be with you.” We have been putting on the mind of God for seven weeks. With God’s imagination, let us pay attention today to the connections between forgiveness and peace, between mercy and justice.

The Gospel really has three chapters, focusing on the disciples’ fear, Jesus’ breath, and Thomas’ doubt. We will pause briefly after each segment.

The reflection challenges our quick instinct to judge. The faith community’s mission is not to be the arbiter of right or wrong, but to bear unceasing witness to the love of God in Jesus. Our final silence will offer you a little extra time for reflection.

*(Slight pause)*

Now Tim Brown will read from The Acts of the Apostles and **Jim De Quattro** will offer questions for us to ponder in silence.

**READING 1**  [**Acts 4:32-35**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/acts/4?32) **(Tim Brown)**

The community of believers was of one heart and mind,  
and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own,  
but they had everything in common.  
With great power the apostles bore witness  
to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus,  
and great favor was accorded them all.  
There was no needy person among them,  
for those who owned property or houses would sell them,  
bring the proceeds of the sale,  
and put them at the feet of the apostles,  
and they were distributed to each according to need.

*(Slight pause)*

**QUESTIONS (Jim De Quattro)**

Imagine being part of a community of one heart and one mind that holds all property in common. How does it feel?

In a country where the gap between rich and poor has never been greater, how do you feel about your contribution to that gap?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE** **(Betty:** Share slide 1, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

Betty: Mia Brownwill now read from the Gospel of John.

### READING 2 - GOSPEL ([Jn 20:19-29](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/john/20?19)) (Mia Brown)

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews.

(Pause for a few seconds.)

Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, “Peace be with you,” and, after saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord, and he said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.” After saying this he breathed on them and said: “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

(Pause for a few seconds.)

Thomas, called the Twin, who was 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 answered, “Unless I can see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.” Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, “Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Do not be unbelieving any more but believe.'" "Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!'"  
  
Jesus said to him: “You believe because you can see me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

*(Slight pause)*

**QUESTIONS**

What doubts and imperfections limit your ability to show mercy?

Spend a minute inside yourself where fear resides. Now invite God in.

**COMMUNAL SILENCE (Betty:** Share slide 2, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

**Betty:** Maryann Dolan will share a reflection for Divine Mercy Sunday.

**READING 3 – REFLECTION (Maryann Dolan)**

One of the most formative pieces of wisdom ever shared with me was in conversation with a woman religious who had suffered much at the hands of the institutional Church. When I asked her how she remained so faithful to and engaged with the Church despite it all, she thoughtfully offered this: “You have to learn to accept an apology that you will never receive.” Forgiveness: a grace too powerful to name.

That’s what Christ gives as he says, “Peace be with you.” He commissions us to share that peace by forgiving others.

*(Slight pause)*

**QUESTIONS (Jim De Quattro)**

“Forgiveness: a grace too powerful to name.” Sit with these words. See where they take you.

**COMMUNAL SILENCE (Betty:** Share slide 3, time 3:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

Betty: Lynn Bufka will lead our sharing.

**SHARING (Lynn Bufka)**

We invite you to briefly share what emerged in **your** heart this morning as you have reflected upon our reading and music. We welcome everyone who wants to speak, and we also know that the wisdom of this community includes both words shared and silent listening,

So let’s begin in silence as we gather our reflections. [Long-ish pause]

Now who would like to start our sharing? Remember to unmute yourself to speak and mute yourself again afterwards.

[Sharing]

[If there is silence more than about 30 seconds before anyone speaks:] Take whatever quiet you need before you speak.

[If there is extended silence during the sharing:] Is there anyone else who would like to share?  [Pause.]

[Stop by about 11:20.]

Thank you.

Now Richard McGinnis will lead us in prayer.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Richard McGinnis)**

Let’s pause to notice the prayer that may be rising in your own heart right now. (Pause.)

Our response will be: Risen One, hear our prayer.

God within us, teach us wisdom in be your mercy for the world. For this we pray. Risen One, hear our prayer.

God among us, keep us in solidarity with people who suffer because of unjust and unmerciful systems. For this we pray. Risen One, hear our prayer.

God beyond us, help us to recognize and learn from models of your mercy and justice, like the sisters of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. For this we pray, Risen One, hear our prayer.

For what else shall we pray? Please remember to unmute and mute yourselves.

(Shared prayers)

Merciful One, we place all of our prayers, those spoken and those unspoken, into your loving care. We will do all that we can to put our prayers into action – while entrusting the outcome to you. Amen.

**OFFERTORY (Judy Sholes)**

In this Easter season, we celebrate the amazing gift of Christ among us. Identifying as a disciple of Jesus Christ is not simply a matter of whether you believe or you don’t. Rather, it is about what we do with our belief. What will you do this week with your belief in Christ among us? [Pause.]

Generous God, Creative Spirit, we commit to sharing our time, talents, and treasures so that we may be a light and a witness to the transforming love of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Mary Ott)**

O Great Love, we are humbled and emboldened

to know that you trust us to be your body in this world.

We are part of that body as we let go of all that separates us from you,

and as we embrace one another and your entire creation with merciful love.

We give you thanks for your presence in and among us. [Pause.]

We remember the night before Jesus died.

At dinner with friends, Jesus knew all that would soon be asked of them,

and, loving them to the end, Jesus showed them how to care for each other

as they went out into the world.

First Jesus washed their feet

and said to them, “Do this in remembrance of me.” (Mark 13:15)

Then he looked at what was in front of them, the bread and the cup,

gifts of the earth and work of human hands, and blessed them.

So let us, too, invite God right now into what is front and center in our lives

knowing that God will indeed enter what we offer – and bless it. [Pause.]

Let us invite God into ourselves so that we become God’s living presence in our world.

Holy One, you transform us as you nourish us here.

May we nourish others with your presence.

Amen.

**OUR FATHER (Bill Fanelli)**

Now let us join our hearts as if we could join our hands to pray in harmony with Christians throughout the world in the words that Jesus gave us:

***All (muted):*** Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come. Your 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 do not let us fall into temptation, but deliver us from evil

for the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

**FINAL BLESSING (Ann Regan)**

God of mercy,

I know what you  
can do with crumbs  
and I am claiming mine,  
every morsel and scrap  
you have up your sleeve.  
Unclench your hand,  
your heart.  
Let the scraps fall  
like manna,  
like mercy  
for me, for us,

for every child,

for the life of  
the world.

Amen.

**CLOSING – Lift Up Your Hearts – Robert F. O’Connor, SJ (Reggie Ott)**

Refrain: Lift up your hearts to the Lord,  
praise God's gracious mercy!  
Sing out your joy to the Lord,  
whose love is enduring.

Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth!

Praise the name above all names!

Say to God, "How wondrous your works,

how glorious your name!" Refrain

Let the earth worship, singing your praise!

Praise the glory of your name!

Come and see the deeds of the Lord,

bless God's holy name! Refrain

Listen now, all you servants of God,  
As I tell of these great works.  
Blessed be the Lord of my life,  
whose love shall endure! Refrain twice

**RESOURCES**

Reflection Quote – Nicole M. Perrone, Catholic Women Preach - <https://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/04112021> )

Final blessing - adapted from “Stubborn Blessing” by Jan Richardson

<https://paintedprayerbook.com/2014/08/11/stubborn-blessing/>

Reflection background -- Mary McGlone – Divine Mercy Sunday 2019

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/scripture-life/sunday-divine-mercy-are-you-convinced>