

- This Sunday after Easter has been known by many names over the years. In years past this Sunday on the Octave Day of Easter was known as “Low Sunday” in contrast to the high feast of Easter.
- It’s also been called “Dominica in Albis”: “White Sunday” – which is a reference to the white garments the newly baptized would wear from Easter until this day, when their white garments were put away.
- This Sunday has also been known as “Quasimodo Sunday,” which is not a reference to the Hunchback of Notre Dame, but rather refers to the first words of the *Introit*: “Quasi modo géniti infántes” which means: “like newborn infants.”
- Yet since the year 2000, we’ve known this Sunday as Divine Mercy Sunday: the day we celebrate that God’s mercy is deeper and richer and greater than any of us can imagine, and that His mercy is available to all who seek it – most especially the worst of sinners.
- Perhaps it’s poetic that Pope Saint John Paul II chose Divine Mercy Sunday to fall on the day when, historically, the newly-baptized would set aside those white robes that symbolize the sinless dignity gained by the Sacrament of Baptism.
- While all of us are charged at our baptism to “bring that [sinless] dignity unstained into the everlasting life of Heaven,” none of us – save Our Lady – ever do so. We all sin, we all stain our baptismal dignity.
- Knowing that none of us can ever, by our own efforts, keep our baptismal garments free from all stain of sin, we all must rely instead on God’s divine mercy to get to Heaven.
- In both the ordinary and extraordinary forms of the Mass today, we hear the story of doubting Thomas in the Gospel.
- Thomas represents all of us in our unwillingness, at times, to believe in God’s mercy and goodness. Yet our belief in these things is important, for as the Gospel of John tells us, it’s through our belief in God that we have life in Jesus’ name!
- Yet the focus of today’s Gospel story is really not St. Thomas and his incredulity, but rather the focus is on Christ’s wounds.
- Throughout our Church’s history we Catholics have always venerated the wounds of Christ, particularly the wound in His side from which blood and water flowed, inaugurating the sacramental life of the Church.
- We see in Christ’s wounds the depth of His love and mercy; we see the lengths to which He was willing to go in order to save us from our sins. Thus, the wounds of Christ have always been symbols of His great mercy and love.
- And as we come once again to this great feast of our Lord’s mercy, Holy Mother Church calls all of us to draw near that wound in our Lord’s side from which water and blood flowed, which is the very font of our Lord’s mercy and compassion.
- This is one of the reasons why we have the image of the Paschal Lamb with blood and water flowing from His breast into a chalice in the very heart of our apse mural.
- As your pastor, I never want you to forget what Christ did for us in allowing His sacred body to be ripped open so violently. I never want you to forget what treasures of love and mercy are to be found in the Sacraments of the Church.
- This is the message of Divine Mercy! Remember, when Christ appeared to St. Faustina, He did so with two rays emanating from His chest: one of red; the other of a light shade.

- These two rays in the Divine Mercy image denote blood and water, just as flowed from our Lord's wounded side. The pale ray stands for the water that makes souls righteous. The red ray stands for the Blood, which is the life of souls.
- Jesus said to St. Faustina: "These two rays issued forth from the very depths of My tender mercy when My agonized heart was opened by a lance on the Cross. These rays shield souls from the wrath of My Father. Happy is the one who dwells in their shelter, for the just hand of God shall not lay hold of Him."
- Of course, if we want to receive our Lord's Divine Mercy, we must have faith in Him and have enough humility to accept His mercy. Sometimes in recalling our sins, we think ourselves beyond God's mercy – which is a result of pride or a lack of faith.
- But in His appearances to St. Faustina, Jesus said: "When a soul sees and realizes the gravity of its sins, let it not despair. With trust let it throw itself into the arms of My mercy, as a child into the arms of its beloved Mother." (Diary, 1541)
- And Jesus wants us to throw ourselves upon His mercy with CONFIDENCE.
- In fact, Jesus told St. Faustina that He loves those souls who have complete confidence in Him (cf. Diary, 294). He also said that if our trust in Him is great, His generosity will be without limit! (Diary, 548). So, we must go to our Lord's wounds with faith!
- For on this Sunday above all, our Lord wants to open up the Church's treasury of mercy, filled by the merits of Jesus' own suffering and death. And for this reason, the Church offers us the possibility of a plenary indulgence today.
- So, let us confidently approach our Lord's wounded side "to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help" (cf. Hebrews 4:16)
- Yet let us not only call upon our Lord's Divine Mercy for ourselves, but let us embody it in our actions, so that we may each be a font of mercy for one another.
- As for the indulgence, any Catholic who attends Mass and receives Holy Communion today, goes to confession within 20 days, offers prayers for the intentions of the Holy Father, and has a detachment from the affection for a sin, even a venial sin, may receive a plenary indulgence for the remission of sin.
- So that we might all take part in these graces, I ask all of you to please kneel and to reflect for a moment on your sins. Think as well of those to whom you've failed to show mercy.
- Together we will first recite *An Act of Contrition*, followed by an *Our Father* and the *Creed*, and the phrase "Jesus, I trust in You" three times. As we do, make a firm act of the will to reject all of your sins and repent of them.
- NB: Indulgence on Divine Mercy Sunday: *Holy Communion; confession within 20 days; prayers for Holy Father; detachment from the affection for a sin, even a venial sin; take part in the prayers and devotions held in honor of Divine Mercy, or in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed or reserved in the tabernacle, recite the Our Father and the Creed, adding a devout prayer to the merciful Lord Jesus (e.g. Merciful Jesus, I trust in you!)"*