

Father O'Connor's Homily for 12 April 2026  
Second Sunday of Easter-A  
Divine Mercy Sunday

Acts of the Apostles 2: 42-47  
1 Peter 1: 3-9  
John 20: 19-31

This Second Sunday of Easter is called "Divine Mercy Sunday." After Our Lord had risen from the dead, He met many people who had failed Him badly. The apostles and disciples had run away and left Him during His passion and death. Except for His Mother Mary, the holy women and the Apostle John, Jesus had gone to His Cross alone.

Then He came back from the dead, and He was merciful and kind to those who had failed Him so miserably. He greets them often by saying, as in today's Gospel, "Peace be with you."

This Sunday is a gift to us from Saint Pope John Paul II. In the year 2000, he canonized Sister Faustina Kowalska, the Apostle of Divine Mercy, and the first saint of the new millennium.

The private revelations of Jesus given to this young, humble Polish nun have mesmerized countless numbers of people during her life and after her death at the age of 33 in 1938.

The message of Divine Mercy is very consoling in the difficult times in which we live. The conversations of Jesus, the Divine Mercy, with lost souls in the diary of Saint Faustina [*Divine Mercy in My Soul*] have given great hope to people whose relatives and friends may have left this life seemingly unprepared to meet God. Saint Faustina wrote that Jesus had revealed to her that He visits every person at the moment of their death and offers them the grace of a final conversion. They are free, of course, to receive it or reject it.

This revelation, which may seem startling, is completely consistent with the merciful salvation that Jesus offered the Good Thief on the cross next to His, a man who apparently had not led a good life in any way. "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom," he pleaded. And Jesus replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" [Luke 23: 42-43]. It also reminds us of Jesus' prayer on the Cross for all of us sinners: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do" [Luke 23: 34].

As recorded in her diary, Jesus said to Sister Faustina: “Write, speak of my mercy. Tell souls where they are to look for solace: that is, in the Tribunal of Mercy [the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Penance, Confession]. There the greatest miracles take place [and] are incessantly repeated. To avail oneself of this miracle, it is not necessary to go on a great pilgrimage or to carry out some external ceremony. It suffices to come with faith to the feet of my representative [a priest] and to reveal to him one’s misery, and the miracle of Divine Mercy will be fully demonstrated” (1447-1448).

This Sacrament of Reconciliation, Penance, Confession is the gift that Jesus gave us in today’s Gospel when He said to the disciples gathered in that locked room, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained” [John 20: 22-23].

The Sacred Heart of Jesus calls each of us to come to Him for forgiveness, healing and salvation. His mercy awaits us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Penance, Confession no matter what we have done or what we have failed to do.

When Pope Francis [who died one year ago on 21 April 2025] was hearing Confessions as a priest and bishop in Argentina, he would often say to people who were scrupulous or despairing: “Go in peace. And let yourself be mercied by God.”

I love that line: “Let yourself be mercied by God.”

On this Divine Mercy Sunday, I, a fellow sinner – who hears Confessions and who goes to Confession – encourage you to open your heart to Jesus today, because His Sacred Heart is wide open to every single one of us.

“Go in peace. And let yourself be mercied by God.”

Jesus says to us in the image of Divine Mercy, “Come to me.” And, as Saint Faustina taught us, we say in response, “Jesus, I trust in you.” Amen.