

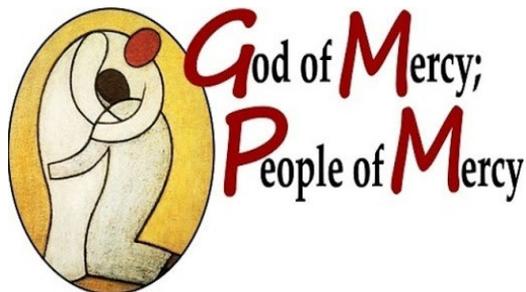
THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

April 19, 2020

Second Sunday of Easter (or Sunday of Divine Mercy)

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

Reflection by: Sister Elise Redmerski, OP



Today, April 19, 2020, one week after Easter and, like Thomas, we are still locked in looking for signs of Jesus in the midst of today's pandemic world. Yes, we are afraid and, yes, like Thomas, it is easy to doubt that Jesus is here with us. Why isn't Jesus doing something about this disease? Jesus, where is your Mercy on this Mercy Sunday? God, You created this world, now fix it.

Many years ago, our community of sisters was gathered for a meeting called by our Major Superior, Sister Vivien Jennings. We were searching for ways to respond to the challenges of the times. After much input and many questions, she sang her response to the then popular song, I beg your pardon, "I Never Promised You A Rose Garden." Yes, God gave us this beautiful "rose garden" but never promised that it would be free of thorns.

And God is responding by saying, "Look around. I am here, and I am fixing things. Can't you see my presence in medical professionals, first responders, police officers, in those still feeding the hungry in food pantries, by parents trying to home school their children both in secular and religious education, and by neighbors reaching out to neighbors? I am present to you by the owner of a restaurant who dropped off six dozen eggs to feed the hungry in our food pantry. At the end of this pandemic time will the garden that God gave us have less thorns because we are less greedy, less wasteful and more appreciative of the sacredness of all life? Will we see the presence of God in each other, no matter where we live or what political party we prefer? And will we take the first reading from today's liturgy to heart?

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.... 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.