

**DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY**  
**THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER**  
**THE OCTAVE DAY OF EASTER**

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- Sun.      The Sunday of Divine Mercy**  
**April 19    THE MERCIFUL LOVE OF JESUS**  
A reflection from St. Cyril's Commentary on John's Gospel
- Mon.      Monday of the Second Week of Easter**  
**20        SHARING IN THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS**  
Blessed Columba Marmion OSB
- Tues.     Tuesday of the Second Week of Easter**  
**21        WHAT GOD'S MERCY ASKS OF US**  
A reflection from Jesus Christ by Fr. Karl Adam
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**22        WALKING WITH JESUS**  
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**23        UNION WITH CHRIST'S DYING & RISING**  
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A reflection developed from a sermon by Bl. Gueric of Igny

Sunday

## THE MERCIFUL LOVE OF JESUS

A reflection from a Commentary on John's Gospel by St. Cyril of Alexandria

Thomas' profession of faith came swiftly, only eight days after he had declared himself unwilling to believe in Christ's resurrection unless he felt the very nail marks in his hands. Jesus came to him with a mercy that removed every possible doubt. Our Lord Jesus Christ miraculously entered the room where his disciples were, even though the doors were closed. This is impossible for an ordinary earthly body so the fact reassured Thomas and the other disciples when he also let his side and the wounds in his flesh be touched and felt.

Thomas had said: *"Unless my hands touch the marks of the nails and I see them, and unless I put my hand into his side, I won't believe!"* Yet, to some extent, all were guilty of disbelief, even after they told Thomas that they had seen the Lord. St. Luke's account says, *"While they stood in amazement, torn between joy and disbelief, Christ said to them: 'Haven't you anything to eat?' and they gave him a piece of broiled fish and part of a honeycomb, which he took and ate before their eyes."* This proved it wasn't only in the mind of Blessed Thomas that disbelieving thought were still lurking.

It was their very astonishment that made them slow to believe. But when it became impossible to disbelieve what they could see with their own eyes, then Blessed Thomas made his profession of faith on behalf of all: *"My Lord and my God!"* Jesus added: *"Because you have seen me, Thomas, you have believed. But blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."* There is wonderful providence behind the Savior's words—for us. They show us once again how much Jesus cares for our salvation. He is good, and as Scripture says, he wants everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth! Nevertheless, the saying may surprise us.

Christ had to be patient with Thomas, as he always is. When Thomas said he wouldn't believe, as when the other disciples too thought they were seeing only a ghost, Jesus showed his patience. It was because of his longing to convince the entire world that he so willingly showed them the marks of the nails and the wound in his side. It was for the sake of all who need such signs as these to support their faith. He wants us to have no possible reason for doubt. So, he even took food though he had not need for it.

When anyone accepts what hasn't been seen and believes on someone else's word, the faith shown honors not only the one who teaches it but the One the teacher proclaims. Thus, faith in Jesus, who has been proclaimed without being shown, is worthy of great praise. Blessed everyone who believes the message of the Holy Apostles. As the Gospel says, they were eyewitnesses and so became ministers of the word. If you want eternal life, if you long for a dwelling place in heaven, then you must listen to these teachers and then go and help others find faith too.

*Monday*

## **SHARING IN THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS**

**Blessed Columba Marmion OSB**

**God is so magnificent in what He does for his Son that He wills that the mystery of His resurrection should extend not only to our souls but also to our bodies. We too shall rise again. This is a dogma of faith.**

**Christ Jesus is our head. We form with him a mystical body. If He is risen, and He is risen in His human nature, it is necessary that we, His members, should share in the same glory. For it is not only in our soul, it is likewise in our body; it is in our whole being that we are members of Jesus Christ. The most intimate union binds us to Jesus. If then He is risen glorious, the faithful who, by grace, make part of His Mystical Body will be united with Him in His resurrection.**

**Hear what St. Paul says on the subject: "Christ is now raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep." He represents the first fruits of a harvest. After him the rest of the harvest is to follow. In the first letter to the Corinthians he teaches "Death came through one man; hence the Resurrection of the dead comes through a man also. Just as in Adam all die, so in Christ we will come to life again. "In Ephesians he says more energetically still "both with and in Christ Jesus He raised us up". How is this? It is that, by faith and grace we are living members of Jesus Christ, we share in His state, we are one with Him. As sharers in divine grace we are saved in hope.**

**This is our faith; this is our hope.**

**But now "our life is hidden with Christ in God". Jesus allowed a reflection of His glorious radiance to be seen by the three disciples on the day of the transfiguration on Tabor. Our inner life here below is known only to God. It is hidden from our eyes. We seek to obtain holy and spiritual liberty by means of a struggle incessantly renewed and faithfully sustained. We too must suffer so as to enter into glory, as Jesus said of himself to the disciples on the road to Emmaus on the very day of His resurrection.**

**May the thoughts of heaven sustain us during the days we have yet to pass here below. Yes, the time will come when there will be no more mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow. God Himself will wipe away the tears of His servants who will become co-heirs of His Son. He will make them sit down at the eternal feast which He has prepared to celebrate the triumph of Jesus and of those whose elder brother Jesus is.**

Tuesday

## WHAT GOD'S MERCY ASKS OF US

A reflection taken from Jesus Christ by Fr. Karl Adam

The initial, immediate reaction which the appearance of the Risen Christ called forth among the disciples was the new and revolutionary realization that he truly is the Lord! *"The Lord is risen indeed and has appeared to Simon!"* This is what all cried out to the two disciples when they returned from Emmaus. *"It is the Lord!"*, was what John said when he saw the risen Christ on the shore of the lake. *"My Lord and my God"*, Thomas exclaimed when he saw the marks of the wounds in the risen Christ. *"Lord, who are you?"*, asked Paul as he lay on the road to Damascus.

This word, "Kyrie", "Lord", was faith's initial response to Easter's message. In his sermon at Pentecost Peter declared solemnly, *"Therefore, let the entire house of Israel know for certain that God has made that same Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ"*. According to the usage of the time "Lord" or "Kyrie" means God's self-revelation to the Chosen People in might. If the disciples had seen Jesus more as human before their Easter experiences, and realized his divinity only when it broke through the surface of his humanity in signs and words, afterwards that divinity became the central fact in their belief. In the risen Christ who was in their midst. They were aware of his humanity only in relationship to his divinity.

The experiences of Easter gave an important depth and clarity to the disciples' conception of Christ. The old ideas about the human figure of Jesus were incorporated into and permeated by a new conception of his divinity. For the first time they were intuitively certain that Jesus the human being was, in the depth of his being, their "Lord and God". Because it was their Lord himself who had come to stand before them in human form, their other ideas began to clarify. They realized that his proper place, his homeland, could be nowhere but in Heaven and at the right hand of God the Father.

The Risen One assured them, *"I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God"*. This is why the apostles now joyfully preached the news that God had exalted Jesus to his right hand. Never again will this "seated at the right hand of the Father" be absent from the Christian creed. The natural consequence was that from this risen Lord all life and spirit, all grace and forgiveness, all power and might are to be poured out over all his people. They hear such words from the risen Christ: *"Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the world"* and *"Behold, I sent you my Spirit which the Father promised"* and *"Receive the Holy Spirit, if you forgive anyone's sins they are forgiven; if you retain them they are retained"*. These final words call attention to their and our mission. The new life of their risen Lord is our eternal life and that of all who believe and follow Jesus. We are to find way to proclaim this everywhere and convincingly.

*Wednesday*

## **Walking with Jesus**

### **Pope Francis**

At this moment Jesus is walking ahead of us. He is always before us. He goes ahead of us and leads the way. This is the source of our confidence and our joy. To be a disciple is to remain with him, to walk behind him, to follow him.

There is something striking about the Gospels: Jesus is often walking and he teaches his disciples along the way. Jesus did not come to teach a philosophy, an ideology, but rather a way, a journey to be undertaken with him, and we learn the way to go by walking. Yes, this is our joy, to walk with Jesus.

And this is not easy or comfortable, because the way Jesus chooses is the way of the cross. As the journey together, he speaks to his disciples about what will happen in Jerusalem: he foretells his passion, death, and resurrection. And, they are shocked and full of fear. They were shocked, certainly, because for them going up to Jerusalem meant sharing in the Messiah, in his victory—we see this in the request made by James and John to sit on either side of him in his kingdom. But they were also full of fear for all that would happen to Jesus, and for what they themselves might have to endure.

Unlike the disciples in those days, we know that Jesus has won, and that we do not need to fear the cross, indeed, the cross is our hope. And yet, we are all too human, sinners, tempted to think as people do, not as God does.

And once we follow the thinking of the world, what happens? The Gospel tells us the disciples were indignant with Jesus. Whenever a worldly mentality predominates, the result is rivalry, jealousy, factions...

As he walks with them Jesus called them to himself. Here is the other action of Jesus. He calls them to himself because he needs to speak to them. Let us allow Jesus to call us to himself. Let us be convoked by him. And let us listen to him with the joy that comes from receiving his word together. Let us be taught by that word and by the Holy Spirit, and to become ever more of one heart and soul, gathered around him.

Thus, we called to himself by our one teacher. I will tell you what the Church needs: she needs your courage, your cooperation, to proclaim the Gospel at all times, both in season and out of season, to bear witness to the truth. The Church needs your prayer, let us never forget this, your prayer to enliven the proclamation of the Word. The Church needs your prayer, your compassion, especially for the suffering of our world.

Let us then walk together behind the Lord and hear him calling us. Together.

Thursday

## **UNITING OURSELVES WITH CHRIST'S DYING AND RISING**

### **A reflection from Origen's Commentary on the Letter to the Romans**

Christ has given his death to us as a call to die to sin and to live for one another. Sin isn't to have free reign in people; it won't if we believe and live the death to sin that Christ shows us. Do you believe you are dead to sin and truly crucified and buried with Christ? This kind of death should be a way of life for those who have faith.

St. Paul says, "*If we have died with Christ we believe that we shall also live with him*". It is important to notice the precise meaning of the phrases Paul uses. He doesn't say "we have lived" as he says "we have died", but he says "we shall live" when Christ is revealed in glory. This is a way of showing that death is at work in the present world and only in the world to come will there will be life in fullness. Christ is our life.

So, "*our life is hidden away in God*" now and for the time being, while death is still at work. Our life will be revealed when Christ is revealed. But the death which is at work in us has certain decisive moments. As with Christ there was a moment when he cried out with a loud voice and gave up the spirit and there was also a time when he was laid in the grave and its entrance was sealed up, and, finally, there was the moment when the women came to look for him in the tomb but didn't find him because he was already risen. Each of us who believe in Christ must experience this three-fold pattern in our own dying and rising.

First of all, Christ's death must be manifested in us by a verbal acknowledgement of our faith in him, our crying out to God; it is, after all, faith that leads to righteousness in the heart and it is a verbal confession that leads to salvation. In the second place, we die with Christ as we put to death those passions which belong only to earth. It is part of carrying Christ's death about with us wherever we go. It is this kind of death which is to be a work in us. In the third place, we have to proclaim Christ's rising by showing that we have already begun to rise from the dead buy walking in a new way of life.

The first moment of our dying in Christ is when we renounce the world, the second is when we renounce sin and the third is when we are perfected in holy wisdom. But this rising may be seen only by God, as only God saw Christ rise from the dead. Christ chose to empty himself and take on the lot of a slave. He became obedient even to death on a cross. By that dying he destroyed the Lord of death. In doing this he set us free. He bound the strong one and plundered all that the devil had possessed. He carries all he has freed to heaven. We have only to empty ourselves in obedience to God and in love for one another. Becoming like Christ, we then will be taken by our Savior into the joy and fullness of eternal life.

*Friday*

## **The Other World**

**A homily by Bishop Porter Taylor**

Jesus said “Come and have breakfast “. How far we have come. In the first Resurrection account, Jesus comes through locked doors. In the second account, Thomas gets to feel around in Jesus wounds. The disciples catch 153 fish at once. And then he says “Come and have breakfast”.

Our pattern of human relationships is like that of Christ with us. In the initial stage we are nervous. This is a new person, totally unfamiliar. We are dazzled by the new world as we fall in love. Everything seems miraculous and larger than life. In the honeymoon stage everything seems perfect. Our black and white world is flipped into color.

The trouble is we want to stay in the honeymoon phase forever. But is it God we worship or our experience of God? If I worship my experience of God, then I am waiting for a spiritual high; God is the provider and I am the consumer. This relationship keeps Jesus distant from us. Jesus is a miracle worker; He is our protector; even our shepherd. But we keep him at arm’s length. We are afraid if we become too intimate, our idealized picture of the relationship will vanish. We can be in love with the idea of being in love.

We hold onto our idealized picture of Jesus because we like to watch him change the world, instead of risking being changed ourselves. For in an intimate relationship this is what will happen.

Of course, I am not discounting Jesus ability to do miracles, nor am I denying Jesus presence in people’s lives in startling ways. But I am saying that Jesus is calling us into deeper, more mature relationship. That means that we must let go of our fantasies and fall in love with Christ.

Have you noticed how quiet, how simple, genuine love is? People who are really in love find doing the simple tasks with one another miraculous. The ordinary tasks become sacramental.

So, we have come a long way. It may be that all the signs of Jesus are pointing beyond the miraculous to something more amazing. For Jesus did not come to give a miracle show. The Word was made flesh to be with us and to show us what love is.

The point of love is to love-  
Not to astonish, not to convince, not to wow us but to invite us “come and have breakfast.” It’s just a silent call to let go of our fantasy of the Superstar and to let the real Jesus into the ordinary rhythms of our daily lives.

Saturday

## **BEING FILLED WITH CHRIST'S LOVING**

A reflection from a sermon by Bl. Gueric of Igny

Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. Christ is the firstfruits of those who have died and the firstborn from the dead. His resurrection is the prototype of all others and guarantees our rising. His resurrection has prepared for us a twofold grace. Through living the paschal mystery in our daily lives we rise from the death of sin, and by our joyful celebrations of his rising we rouse ourselves from the sluggishness of spiritual sleep.

A person is indeed slothful and half-hearted if that person doesn't feel a thrill of joy, a sense of new life and vigor, at the glad cry: The Lord is risen! For myself, when I looked upon the dead Jesus I was overwhelmed by despairing grief. But in the living God, as Scripture calls him, my heart and my flesh could rejoice. It is with no small profit to faith, no slight dividend of joy, that Jesus returns to me from his tomb. I recognize the living God where only a little while ago I could only mourn a dead human being. My heart was filled with sorrow because he had been slain and now that he is risen not only my heart but even my flesh rejoices in the confident hope that I too will rise and be immortal.

I slept and I arose, Christ tells us. Awake then, my sleeping self, and rise from the dead so that Christ may give you light! As the new sun rises from below the horizon, the grace of the resurrection already casts its radiance over the entire world. It is a radiance reflected in the eyes of those who have watched with Christ from before daybreak. This wakefulness ushers in the day of eternity.

This reveals to us the day that will know no evening and whose sun will never set. Only once did that sun that is our Jesus go down, and now once more and once and for all that sun has ascended above not only the earth but the heavens. He has led death captive in his triumphal procession.

This is the day that the Lord has made! Let us rejoice and be glad! If you too watch daily at the threshold of the House of Wisdom and keep your eyes fixed on the doorway of that House, then you too, like Magdalen, as she with you keeps vigil at the entrance to his tomb, will find the One she found. You will know that what was written of wisdom was written of Christ: Wisdom hastens to make self-disclosure to all those who desire it whole-heartedly. Those who rise early to seek this wisdom will have no trouble but will find it at the gate. While it was still dark Mary came to watch at the tomb. She found Jesus. She found love. She found love not according to the flesh but in the spirit. Jesus called her to share that love by sharing Him whom she loved. If you too do such watching, see if you don't find yourself singing with Mary: "*In the morning fill us with your love; we shall exult and rejoice all our days*"! We rejoice by loving one another. We rejoice by showing mercy as it has been shown us. In this love is the fullness of life.