

# *Dominica II Paschae in ALbis A seu Dominica in Divina Misericordia*

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Lectio Divina by Fr. Randy Soto

## I. Lectio

A. Saint Athanasius used to refer to the Easter Tide as “the Great Sunday.” Understood as a great Sunday each and every one of the Sundays of Easter is united with the same spirit of joy which characterizes the encounter with the Risen Christ.

B. Traditionally this Sunday was called *Dominica in Albis* or White Sunday. The neophytes used to wear their white baptismal garments during the Octave of Easter and were introduced to the community on this second Sunday of Easter. Also it was the Sunday in which they began to receive the Mystagogical Catechesis. More recently, in a decree dated 23 May 2000, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments stated that “*throughout the world the Second Sunday of Easter will receive the name Divine Mercy Sunday, a perennial invitation to the Christian world to face, with confidence in divine benevolence, the difficulties and trials that mankind will experience in the years to come.*” While both events seem to be different; it is really not difficult to see the connection between the Grace of God manifested at Baptism (In Albis) and the grace of God manifested in the Sacrament of Penance and the Eucharist (In Divina Misericordia). By both celebrating both events the Church has better chance to introduce the neophytes into the Mystagogical Mystery of our Faith. The Newly Baptized gets exposed right away to the ecclesiological celebration of:

- 1) Penance “*For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world;*”
- 2) Communion: “*Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your Dearly Beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.*”

C. The First Reading is taken from the Book of Acts of the Apostles. This, so called Lucan X-Ray, reveals the *status quo* of the Apostolic Church. God’s providence was upon every person: “*And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common.*” The community has come to share everything in common; has gained knowledge about praying together and unceasingly; but most of all is has come to see and to believe that Jesus Christ is in the Eucharist.

E. Ps 118 has been in all of our Easter celebrations. Its refrain is not just a thank-you note to a Father but a thankful prayer to the almighty God for blessing us with the New Life in Christ: “*Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.*”

F. Peter invites us in his 1<sup>st</sup> Letter to rejoice because our corruptible nature has been transformed into an eternal inheritance: “*God has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*”

G. In this episode John wants to catechize his audience to love and to believe in Jesus as Messiah and Son of God. Under this scope, John presents us with the doubtful question of Thomas. Jesus' response is a golden phrase for anyone who wishes to follow Christ: *"You believe in me, Thomas, because you have seen me, says the Lord; blessed are they who have not seen me, but still believe!"*

### III. *Meditatio*

A. Christ is risen! And He lives forever and ever! This is, in a nutshell, our Easter Proclamation. Around this mystery the People of God assembles today to welcome those who were introduced into the Church (RCIA) last Saturday Night at the Easter Vigil.

B. Through the Sacrament of Baptism we form a people, a community of persons redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ. We form the family of Jesus, and as members of his body, the Church, we gather together to partake of the *"Breaking of the Bread,"* so that nourished by the energy of the Risen Lord we may walk in his ways till He comes again. By receiving new members the whole community is challenged to live according to the gift of faith and thus give example to those who begin to walk with Jesus.

C. Because we are all aware of our own fragilities, and because it's very easy to give into temptation, we witness to our new Catholics that God's grace is more powerful than any sin we may have committed. Jesus, by his gratuitous Mercy grants us forgiveness of the sins committed after Baptism through the Sacrament of Penance.

### III. *Oratio*

We begin our celebration by rejoicing with Ezra: *"Rejoice to the full in the glory that is yours, and give thanks to God who called you to his kingdom, alleluia"* (Introit); then we pray to experience the joy Christ's Mercy and celebrate his Resurrection with love and thanksgiving: *"God of mercy, you wash away our sins in water; you give us new birth in the Spirit, and redeem us in the blood of Christ. As we celebrate Christ's Resurrection increase our awareness of these blessings, and renew your gift of life within us."* (OP); during the offertory, we pray for an increase of joy and happiness: *"Lord, through faith and baptism we have become a new creation. Accept the offerings of your people (and of those born again in baptism) and bring us to eternal happiness"* (PG). Christians rejoice because *"Jesus is the true Lamb that took away the sins of the world. By dying he destroyed our death; by rising he restored our life"* (Preface). Should anyone doubt of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist we are reminded at communion: *"Jesus spoke to Thomas: Put your hand here, and see the place of the nails. Doubt no longer, but believe, alleluia."* (CA) Finally we ask that we may keep in mind the mysteries we have just celebrated: *"Almighty God may the Easter sacraments we have received live forever in our minds and hearts."* (PC).

### III. *Contemplatio*

A. *"Admit the limits of your senses to Understand!"* from **Hilary de Poitiers**. *"The Lord presents himself to strengthen the faith of Thomas by meeting his challenge. He gives him*

*his body to feel, his wounds to handle. He, indeed, who would be recognized as having suffered wounds must necessarily produce the body in which those wounds were received. I ask at what point in the walls of that closed house the Lord bodily entered. The Apostle has recorded the circumstances with careful precision: "Jesus came when the doors were shut and stood in the midst." Did he penetrate through bricks and mortar or through stout woodwork- substances whose very nature it is to bar progress? For there he stood in bodily presence; there was no suspicion of deceit. Let the eye of your mind follow his path as he enters. Let your intellectual vision accompany him as he passes into that closed dwelling." (ACCS, IV/b: 369).*

**B. Christ's Patience with Thomas and Us: from Cyril of Alexandria.** *"Jesus said to him: Because you have seen me, Thomas, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." These words were wonderfully pertinent, and they can be of great help to us. They demonstrate once again how much he cares for our souls, for he is good, and as Scripture says, "He wants everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth." Even so, this saying of his may surprise us. As always, Christ had to be patient with Thomas when he said he would not believe and with the other disciples too when they thought they were seeing a ghost. Because of his desire to convince the whole world, he most willingly showed them the marks of the nails and the wound in his side. Because he wanted those who needed such signs as a support for their faith to have no possible reason for doubt, he even took food, although he had no need for it" (ACCS, IV/b: 373).*