

## Homily on the Divine Mercy Sunday – 2021

[Acts 4:32-35](#) [1 Jn 5:1-6](#) [Jn 20:19-31](#)

**“Hold on! There is still hope.”**

Dearly Beloved, Grace and peace from the resurrected Lord be with you. The joy of the resurrection still fills our hearts as we gather again to celebrate the Eucharist. On this second Sunday after Easter, we celebrate the Divine Mercy of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. The celebration of God’s love and mercy is an indication of the hope that exist for all who come to faith in Christ Jesus. God, through Christ continues to give every one another chance to live through Him in our true identity; our identity through baptism – as children of God.

Permit me to share with you a story I read from a blog online. The title reads ***“True testimony of an elderly lady saved from committing suicide through an 11 year old boy.”*** It was about a missionary, who was in the habit of handing our spiritual flyers after church. Soon, one little boy joined him in carrying out this mission of touching lives through flyers. The little boy found this to be very elating. They did this every Sunday unabated. But, on one fateful Sunday, it was raining profusely and the missionary decided not to go out for the distribution of the flyers.

He had just made the flyers with the caption of, **“Hold on! There is still hope.”** He was however, surprised when the little boy showed up prepared, not minding the heavy rain. The missionary asked him to drop the idea of handing out the flyers, that particular Sunday, because of the heavy rain. However, the boy’s persistence made the missionary allow him to go despite the bad weather. He was excited as he ran into the rain, but instead of their usual visits to parks and walk-ways, he went house to house knocking on doors and giving flyers to whomever opened the door. He spent a lot of time doing this and reaching the last house, he knocked for about five minutes, but there was no response. He was about to leave but decided to knock and wait further. Just about the time he decided to give up, an elderly woman opened the door. Smiling, he gave her the flyer and said, “this message is from God.” The boy left and was deeply happy that he had accomplished the task for that Sunday.

At the Church the following Sunday, an elderly woman indicated that she had a testimony to share. She went ahead to tell the congregation that she had been coming with her husband to the Church every Sunday until she lost him while they were away on a trip. She then said that while she had been coming, but no one had noticed her mourning clothes, nor the absence of her husband. She went on to say that she had been lonely, and that her only child died years ago, before the age of 20. She was indeed troubled and hopeless and lacked peace until that Sunday when she decided to end it all by hanging herself.

She had affixed the rope and set about placing her neck in the noose, readily planning to kick the stool away from her feet, when she heard a continuous knocking at her door. She remained quiet for some time thinking that the person would go away, but the knocking continued. She came down, went to the door and found a little boy with a flyer who said to her “this message

is from God.” Opening the flyer, she saw the caption “Hold on! There is still hope.” She sat down and read it. After reading the flyer, she felt an inner peace and felt a renewed reason to live and to be happy. She saw herself as a blessed and lucky woman. She proceeded to disengage the rope and was thankful for the little boy who dared to go out in the rain, to give her that message of peace. Incidentally, the boy and the missionary were in the Church and they were utterly speechless.

Beloved, there are some moments in each person’s life, when the whole world seems to be crashing down on their head. It could be a situation of confusion and fear of the unknown and more severely absence of peace, due to some experiences or encounters which at times seem to signal that God had abandoned us. At such moments some people tend to be utterly confused and restless. Others, in an attempt to find solace, may take up some activities that end up aggravating and even increasing their problems.

The above situation could have been the exact description of the apostles in the upper room. We are told that they locked themselves up, “fearing the Jews;” the very same people who caused the arrest and subsequent death of Christ. They represent our fears, all the fears that make it difficult to learn to trust God, and know that He will take care of us. What is interesting and worthy to note, is that even in through locked doors, Jesus comes into their midst. In our own fears, uncertainties, and unwillingness to let go, one thing is certain, Jesus is here and will always be here. No matter where or how you have locked your heart or your mind as a result of fear and uncertainties, his mercy is able to find you.

As he approached them, we are told, he breathed on them. Remember the first time you read something similar from the bible. That was from the book of Genesis (Gen 2:7), when God gave life to man. Jesus, through the power of His resurrection now gives life to those of us who believe, but have allowed all kinds of fears to displaced them. After breathing on them He said, “Peace be with you!”. This was exactly what they needed – ‘Peace’. Jesus could not have wished them peace, if they were already enjoying peace. Hence, He meant to tell them to replace their troubled minds and confusion with peace from the power of His resurrection. He said “peace be with you” not just once but multiple times.

Being absent from the encounter with Christ and the reception of the Holy Spirit of God, Thomas was not renewed with the others so he continued to live in the past condition of fear, doubt and lack of peace. No wonder he stood his ground, in that he would not believe unless he sees and touches. When we are disconnected from God through our absence from the sacraments and from hearing the word of God, we live in fear and lack the needed peace. When we are disconnected from God, we run the risk of being unable to receive the infusion of the Holy Spirit and the divine commissioning. Like Thomas, we fall into doubt and disbelief because we missed the divine action.

Another intriguing observation, is how Thomas’ doubt and search for the truth brought him to a greater acknowledgement and awareness of Jesus’ identity. The first time in the gospels that

anyone refers to Jesus as “Lord and God”. If you are in such a state, where you are still trying to search for what the resurrection should mean for you, just do not worry, but be open and sincere with your search and see what greater understanding and revelation God will offer you. In any situation you find yourself in, learn to be hopeful and trusting. His mercy endures and each of us is given another opportunity to experience His mercy. Don’t be afraid anymore, open your heart to His love and mercy.