

Rectoría de San Juan de Dios
II Sunday of Easter, Cycle B
Acts 4, 32-35; Ps 118; 1Jn 5, 1-6; Jn 20, 19-31
Fr Dante Gabriel Jiménez Muñoz Ledo

Let Us Arouse Faith Through Mercy

In the faces of those of us who have celebrated Easter is reflected the joy and hope of our encounter with the resurrected Jesus. Nevertheless, like the first disciples in the cenacle, we need to continue to assimilate in a timely way the mystery of our new relationship with Jesus.

That “*evening of the day of the resurrection,*” as St John writes, the disciples were “*behind locked doors, in the darkness of their fears.*” Jesus takes them out of hiding to awaken in them a faith so great that they become dynamic witnesses of His salvation. Here a second principle of the faith will be born in the testimony of the disciples of Jesus: they will not give their life for a lie. If afterwards they gave an extreme testimony, it is because they recognized in the risen Jesus, who now appeared to them with the signs of His mercy, the eucharistic resurrected One.

It seems that we, after two thousand years, find ourselves to be like those disciples in the fear and secrecy of our faith. St John Paul II, who instituted this second Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday, saw the world with this image of the primitive Christian community, a world submerged in the darkness of its fears and indecisiveness, living in hiding with a faith that was not flourishing. A world that lacks the experience of mercy and a faith that gives life. A world that should go beyond giving alms and assistance to the giving of persons, to arouse an incontestable faith.

We want to arouse this faith through mercy because only in that way will our faith be an inexhaustible fountain of life.

How can we begin?

1-From the experience of community

As in the Acts of the Apostles, we must develop a community that lives with only one heart and one soul. It is the community that discerns the forms of solidarity, not only of sharing material goods, but many other new needs in the community of our family, our group, or society.

The community confirms all its members in belonging and secures our identity. Thomas was skeptical because when Jesus appeared the first time, he was not with the community. At times, in our close community, there is someone who is outside it, affectively or ideologically, and we don't notice it. That community member has so much need to be confirmed in the spirit of belonging and communion! The community wakens a visible faith that consolidates our dedication.

The second time that Jesus appears, "*eight days after,*" is Sunday; the disciples are reunited in the assembly as a new community that wants to worship Jesus. This day will be the "*Day of the Lord.*" The "*Day of the Eucharist*" is no longer the Jewish commemoration of the Sabbath that they were leaving behind, but a concrete encounter with the Risen Lord who now lives in God's dimension, beyond time and space, but who is present to support them in the precious gift of His life and His love.

2-From our own victories

Those of us who have been born of God have the power to conquer the world. This comes about with the spirit of mercy, understanding that our testimony demands blood and water; that is, it demands the most intimate gift of our being, that life that springs from our heart, in the likeness of the merciful resurrected One.

We can remember times that we have conquered the world with love. It is like someone who is being threatened with a gun; he can risk overcoming his captors with mercy and make it clear that God has the last word about man. Each of us can remember a unique moment in his life when the sign of our kindness, as merciful love, has conquered the malevolence of others.

3-By showing our signs of mercy

We can stir up faith in the world if we show our signs of mercy, not as presumption but as a testimony of love. It is hard to talk about ourselves, to find the vertex to which we have sacrificed, even though only a little, for someone else; nevertheless, it is real, we have done it.¹ We can find signs of mercy in our body and in our soul, there where we have dared to sacrifice our very selves for transcendent love.

¹ I remember the image of an elderly woman of 80, carrying a cooking pot full of food to feed her grandchildren who had been abandoned to her care by her youngest daughter. She was of the opinion that she was not useful. I saw the contrary: that broken hand, whose bone was totally crooked and misshapen; it was a sign of her mercy. I thought about that disabled hand that now carried the pot to feed those little children. It was the same hand that had rocked the cradle and that had served others all her life.

Let us imagine for a minute the feelings of love and faith that Jesus arouses in His disciples when he appears with the signs of His mercy, the holes of the nails in His hands and His open side. Those signs, only to look at them, awaken a love that makes them tremble. Any apostle would have prostrated himself, taken the hand of Jesus with great care, drawn it to himself with love, and kissed His glorified flesh. I believe that this is the way that the Jesus of mercy appears before us. We make ourselves contemporaries of the disciples in that encounter and we can confirm the permanence of the love of Jesus.

As the possibilities arise, we can translate this mercy of Jesus into our own signs of love, and we can arouse the world with small works of mercy that are the concrete proof that Jesus is alive and continues to love through us.