



The Thomas Dilemma

FR. JOSEPH JUKNIALIS

Will is a widower, now in his eighties. He calls every once in a while, partly to talk but really wanting to know how he can convince his grown children and grandchildren to come back to church. He tells me they're good people, but he would like them to have faith. It's been a mainstay in his life, he tells me, something that has gotten him through many difficulties. He loves his family but says their life would be so much richer if they had an active faith life. I try to tell Will he can't argue them into faith. At most he can share with them how faith has been a blessing in his life, hoping that it might then spark an interest in them.

The disciples in the Gospel story about "Doubting Thomas" experienced Will's dilemma. They were unable to convince Thomas that the Lord had risen. He insisted that he would only believe when he could put his fingers and hands into Jesus' wounds, which of course is just what happens the next time they are gathered. For Thomas, words were not enough; he needed the experience.

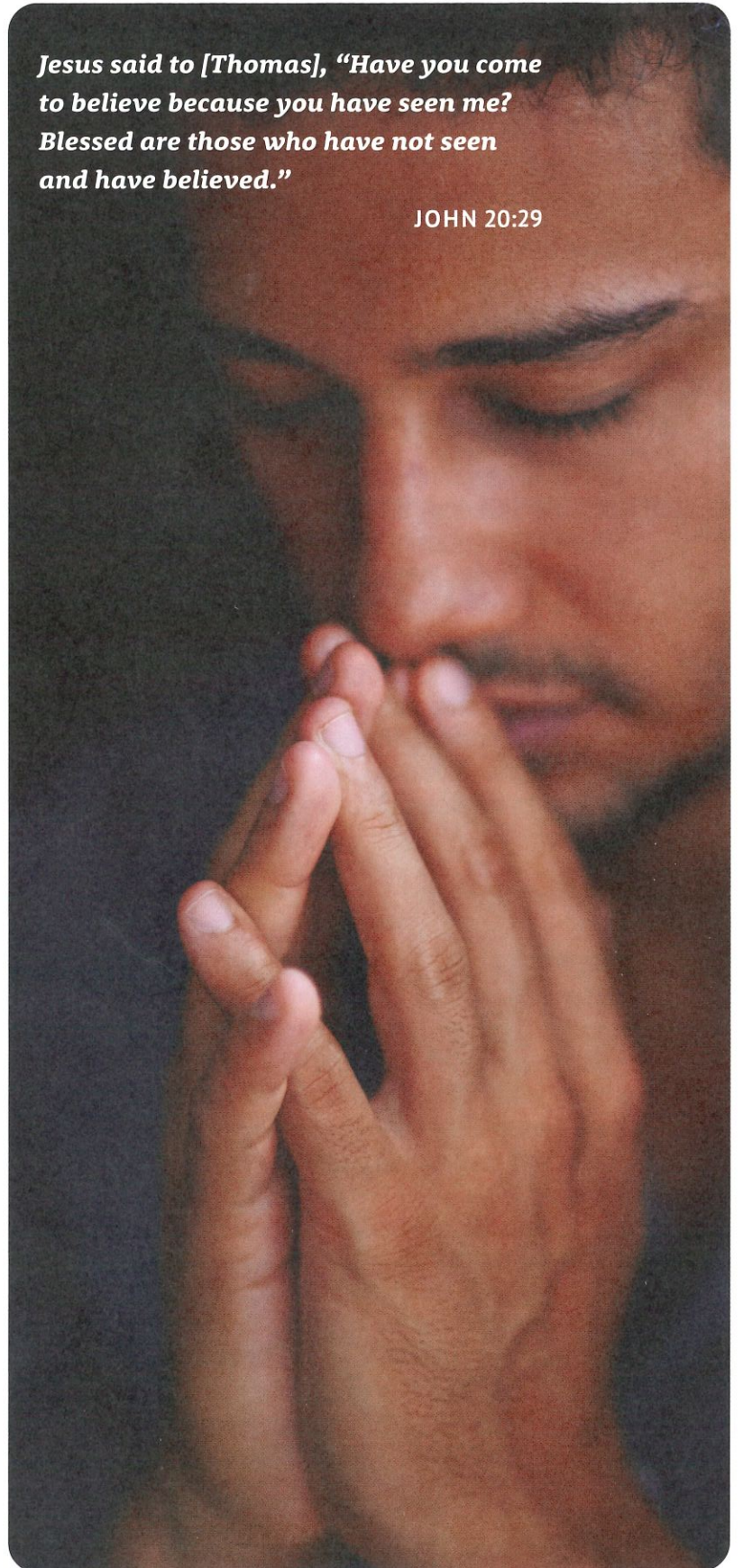
Sometimes that's true for us. We've heard the truth, but we haven't experienced the truth as real or relevant or something we cannot live without. The experience of grave need and then surrendering to God is what many need to remain faithful. Meanwhile, the faithful pray for those who do not believe, especially those we dearly love. ●

Reflect

Have you ever surrendered to faith even when you were filled with doubt?

Jesus said to [Thomas], "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

JOHN 20:29



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REFLECTIONS

The Second Sunday of Easter is celebrated as Divine Mercy Sunday in our Catholic tradition. Although we celebrate daily God's grace and mercy in our lives, on this particular weekend we focus on this essential quality of God's abiding presence.

In our American legal system, we tend to focus on justice, an important and essential aspect of our social and political lives. We assume that others will obey the laws of the land; we demand that disobedience be punished. That's justice. Of course, if we are honest, we often assume we ourselves are exceptions to the rules when we transgress. Even so, we do expect justice to be done and we are offended when we hear about injustices.

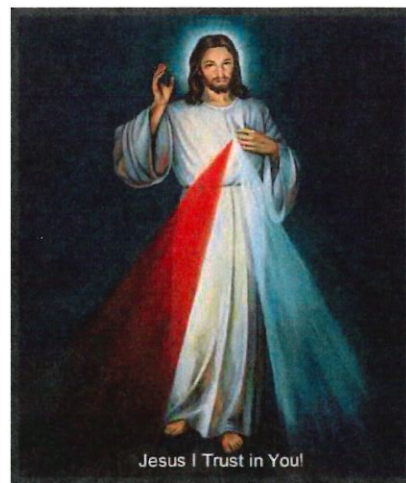
Our spiritual lives are an admixture of both justice and mercy. As scripture emphasizes, "*If you, O Lord, kept a record of our sins, who could stand their ground?*" (Psalm 131) If we count on justice alone in our spiritual lives, then surely each of us is doomed since we have, as one of the Opening Prayers for mass suggests, "*no merits to plead our cause before God.*" Psalm 131 continues, however: "*With you is forgiveness that you may be revered.*" God chooses to be merciful toward us, forgiving our sins as we ask, not because we are deserving but because God is love and mercy itself.

That in a profound way is why we celebrate this Divine Mercy Sunday - because God is love and mercy. That recognition of those qualities is at the

heart of our faith. One of the prayers frequently used in the funeral rite underscores this reality: "*May God grant . . . a merciful judgment.*" Yes, judgment is still reality, the consequence of our choosing sin, but God chooses to be forgiving. However, God's abiding mercy does not give us the license to do as we please, to choose sin without thought, in the assurance that God will always forgive. Rather, God's mercy is the abiding presence within us that guides us to know right from wrong and to assist us in choosing to follow God's plan.

The Christian challenge is for us to live daily, opening ourselves to God's abiding grace, such that we choose to avoid serious sin. In that sure knowledge of faithful discipleship, we can then depend on God's mercy to deliver us from sin and death.

From Father Ken



My Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

This Sunday we enter the Second Week of Easter. We also celebrate the Feast of Divine Mercy. We call the Sunday after Easter Divine Mercy Sunday, named by Saint John Paul II, at the Canonization of Saint Faustina on April 30, 2000. Divine Mercy Sunday is not a feast based solely on Saint Faustina's revelations. The second Sunday of Easter was already a solemnity as the Octave Day of Easter. The title "Divine Mercy Sunday" does, however, highlight the meaning of the day.

We are beginning the annual sign up for Gregorian Masses. We started this ministry several years ago, allowing those who choose to enlist, to have 30 masses said without interruption, shortly after their death. The custom of offering Gregorian Masses is the ultimate form of honoring a deceased loved one. This custom has been in effect in the Catholic Church since the 600s. You can choose to pay the yearly contribution of \$60.00 in one payment; make 4 payments of \$15.00; or make 2 payments of \$30.00 each. At the time of your death, or the death of the person you have chosen for this enrollment, a call is made to one of our priestly partners and the 30 masses are assigned and scheduled. If you would like to participate in this ministry, call the office and leave a message for us to contact you.

Do you have musical talent? Please consider being a cantor. If you have questions or an interest in being a cantor, contact Ann Welch at 817-371-0324 or Mel Miller at 972-333-7455.

The Advisory Council will meet Thursday April 11th, after Mass, in the Family Dining Room.

For the next couple of weeks, The Chapel Office hours will be 9:30AM to 10:30AM and 6:00PM to 8:00PM. For emergencies, call me at 682-228-7395.

The Secular Franciscans' monthly Fraternity meeting will be on Sunday April 14th, beginning with Adoration in the Chapel at 2:00PM. All are invited.

Recently a poll concerning Americans' religion affiliation or inclination revealed:

<i>30% of Americans</i>	<i>Don't identify with religion</i>
<i>80% of US adults</i>	<i>Think religion is losing influence on American life</i>
<i>30% of US adults</i>	<i>Describe themselves as atheists, or nothing, in particular</i>

According to a number of Catholic clergy, only our prayers and actions can reverse this number. Perhaps those of us who love and practice our faith can influence those skeptics among us by our prayers and living our faith.

May Christ's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

*God Give You Peace,
Mike Pierson*



Mass Intentions

April 7, 2024	Intention of all SFV Catholic Chapel Parishioners
April 8, 2024	Helen Wolfe Funeral Mass & Rosary (9:30 AM Rosary – 10:00 AM Mass)
April 9, 2024	Fr. Bob Strittmatter
April 10, 2024	Repose of the Soul of Beatrice Gagnon By Mike & Doris Pierson
April 11, 2024	Repose of the Soul of Mable Groh By Jim Groh
April 12, 2024	Repose of the Souls of Devin & Jonathan Massey By Mel & Julie Miller
April 13, 2024	Repose of the Soul of Maria Salinas By Trudie Hughes 9:00 AM Mass)

Dear Padre,

What is Divine Mercy Sunday?

Pope John Paul II declared Sr. Faustina Kowalska a saint of the Church on April 30, 2000, and in a decree dated May 23, 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 [we] will experience in the years to come.”

Saint Faustina was born in 1905 and spent most of her life in Poland, in the Congregation of the Virgin Mary of Mercy. She experienced an extraordinary union with God. She received exceptional graces, revelations, visions, hidden stigmata, the ability to read souls, and the gift of prophecy.

One of the images that was revealed to Faustina was that of the merciful Jesus, touching his Sacred Heart, from which beams of red and white light came forth. This image and her devotion to the divine mercies gathered thousands of supporters throughout the world. We still see the traditional image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in many of our churches today. In some churches, we might see the newer image, inspired by the saint. Saint Faustina Kowalska died in 1938 at the age of thirty-three, leaving an impressive mystical legacy. She is a disciple of God’s divine mercy for the twenty-first century. ●

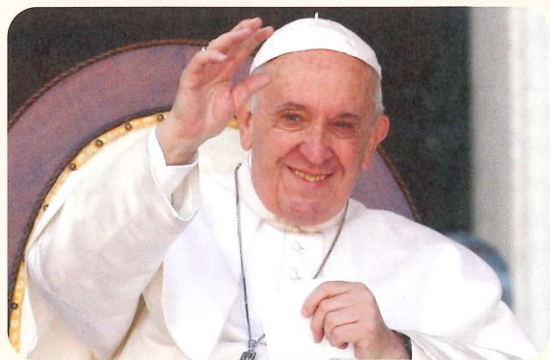


The Redemptorists / DearPadre.org

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
April 8	April 9	April 10	April 11	April 12	April 13	April 14
<i>Annunciation of the Lord</i>	<i>Easter Weekday</i>	<i>Easter Weekday</i>	<i>St. Stanislaus, Bishop and Martyr</i>	<i>Easter Weekday</i>	<i>Easter Weekday</i>	<i>Third Sunday of Easter</i>
Is 7:10–14; 8:10	Acts 4:32–37	Acts 5:17–26	Acts 5:27–33	Acts 5:34–42	Acts 6:1–7	Acts 3:13–15, 17–19
Heb 10:4–10	Jn 3:7b–15	Jn 3:16–21	Jn 3:31–36	Jn 6:1–15	Jn 6:16–21	1 Jn 2:1–5a
Lk 1:26–38						Lk 24:35–48



A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

The story of Thomas is in fact the story of every believer. There are times of difficulty when life seems to belie faith, moments of crisis when we need to touch and see. Like Thomas, it is precisely in those moments that we rediscover the heart of Christ, the Lord’s mercy.

HOMILY, ROME, APRIL 24, 2022