

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter/Divine Mercy Sunday April 12, 2015**

**Readings- Acts 4:32-35, Psalm 118, I John 5:1-7, John 20: 15-31**

### **We Are Witnesses Of Christ's Resurrection**

*“But Christians, by the grace of Christ, dead and risen, are the seeds of another humanity, in which we seek to live in service to one another, not to be arrogant, but rather respectful and ready to help. This is not weakness, but true strength! Those who bear within them God's power, his love and his justice, do not need to employ violence; they speak and act with the power of truth, beauty and love”*  
*(Pope Francis' Easter Message 2015).*

Today is the second Sunday of Easter, which is called also Low Sunday when compared with the previous Sunday- the Sunday of Sundays. Added to this Sunday is the request of the Pope John Paul II in 2000 that this Sunday be remembered as the Divine Mercy Sunday. In all these we celebrate the love and mercy of God, which has its culmination in the resurrection of Christ. What does the resurrection of Jesus mean? Is it simply the raising of a corpse or simple restoration of life as in the case of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5: 21-43), Lazurus (John 11: 1-43) and son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7: 11-17)? All these analogies are poor enough to adequately describe Christ's resurrection. Christ's body was not restored to human life, but was completely transformed beyond the limitations of space and time.

Resurrection of Christ remains the bedrock and the summit of our Christian faith (I Cor. 15: 14-16). The disciples who were the first witnesses of the resurrection as we read in our first reading (Acts 4:32-35), bore witness by forming the first Christian community of one heart and one mind, where love, selflessness and self-giving were at the foundation. The disciples through their witnesses lived out the love, which Christ commanded them as we read in our second reading (1 John 5:1-6). The gospel (John 20: 19-31) continues the account of Jesus' appearance after the resurrection, which we have been reading throughout this Easter octave. The reason why Jesus stayed on for 40 days after resurrection was to clear the doubts of the resurrection and to empower the disciples to become truly his witnesses.

The Gospel has three central messages: the pouring of peace to the disciples, the commissioning-empowerment with the gift of Holy Spirit to bind and loose (basis of the Church teachings on the Sacrament of Reconciliation), and the case of Thomas. Let us reflect more on Thomas' case. We may blame Thomas for being doubtful, but we have to remember that as of that time the fact of the resurrection was not clear even to other disciples (That is why Peter denied him, Judas betrayed him and other disciples abandoned him). Thomas has left for us an example of humility. He accepted the message of the resurrection and went ahead to bear witness to it, even to the point of shedding his blood for it. Let us pray for the gifts of wisdom and humility to accept the message of the resurrection and to be truly witnesses to it by being instruments of God's love, peace, and reconciliation in our day-to-day life. Amen.

*“Therefore, my beloved brothers (sisters), be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15: 58).*