



# Bringing Home the Word



Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday)

April 3, 2016

## Everlasting Sweetness

By Janel Esker

**O**ne of the best things about Easter is the candy. Even more spectacular than jelly beans are those crème-filled, fat-laden chocolate eggs. And some people (though not me) claim a love of marshmallow chicks and bunnies.

I think we love holiday candy so much, in part, because it only comes around once a year. Its rarity makes it special. The same could be said about the Apostle Thomas. He's the crème egg of the Bible—his story comes around only on the second Sunday of Easter, and

it's usually a favorite of Christians who take heart in believing without seeing. Thomas' rarity makes him special.

But this Gospel story is about more than Thomas; it also reveals much about the risen Jesus. First, Jesus moves through locked doors and walls to get to his beloved disciples; his love knows no boundaries. Second, even in his resurrected body he still has wounds. He knows what it's like to be broken and hurt deeply. Third, he speaks and breathes peace—not an easy, everything's-going-to-be-fine peace, but a hard-won peace that trusts in God despite suffering and fear.

Jesus does the same for us today. Our risen Lord can move beyond any spiritual walls we've built or emotional doors of doubt we've triple-locked. He can identify with our wounds and pain. He promises us a deep, hard-won peace. And, fortunately, Jesus comes around much more often than Thomas or chocolate-covered crème eggs. Our risen Lord is with us always. †

## Sunday Readings

### Acts 5:12–16

"More than ever, believers in the Lord, great numbers of men and women, were added to them."

### Revelation 1:9–11a, 12–13, 17–19

"I am the first and the last.... Once I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever."

### John 20:19–31

"Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

## A Word From Pope Francis

**Blessed are those** who, on the strength of the word of God proclaimed in the Church and witnessed by Christians, believe that Jesus Christ is the love of God incarnate, Mercy incarnate.... Jesus gave the Apostles the Holy Spirit so that they could spread the forgiveness of sins in the world.... The Church is sent by the Risen Christ to pass on to men and women the forgiveness of sins and thereby make the Kingdom of love grow, to sow peace in hearts so they may also be strengthened in relationships, in every society, in institutions.



—*Regina Caeli*, April 7, 2013  
(Divine Mercy Sunday)



- What helps me to believe in Jesus? What hinders my faith?
- What signs and wonders have been done to and through me?

# The Hope of Easter

By Rev. Matthew Allman, CSsR

**C**hristmas is nice. Birthdays are fine. Thanksgiving has its charm. But Easter is the day—and the season—that transforms all other days and gives them purpose.

When we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, we proclaim that life does not end with the hopelessness of the grave. God loves us too much to let our lives fade to nothingness or to allow the power of sin and death to have the last say.

No, in Christ, God has definitively intervened on our behalf, taking on our human nature and transforming it through his obedience to the Father. In the Easter event of Christ's resurrection, we discover the possibility opened by God for our own lives. The power of the plentiful redemption offered in Christ is such that no tomb need ever hold us again.

Easter teaches us that no matter how sin and death have changed our lives, there is always reason to hope, because God can and does raise the dead. God can lift us up when we feel trapped by our sins or our past choices. God can find a way for us into the future when we feel like all our paths are cut off. And God can roll the stone from our grave when every human power has been exhausted and all that seems left are tears.

There's nothing like Easter! How blessed we Christians are to celebrate this season, and how blessed is our Redemptorist family to have as our mission in the Church and in the world



the proclamation of plentiful redemption and the challenge of conversion that calls us to live in the light of the Easter mystery.

As we move through the Easter season, may we embrace the call to be modern-day apostles, witnesses of Christ's resurrection. May our joy in the new life given by Christ draw others to the abundance of his grace. †

## St. Faustina: An Introduction

By Catherine M. Odell

**Saint Faustina** (born Helena) Kowalska (1905–1938) was born into a large, poor Polish family and devout from early childhood. After many visions of the Lord, at age nineteen she joined the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Warsaw.

On February 22, 1931, Sr. Faustina received a miraculous vision. Shining

and white-robed, Jesus appeared to her with rays of red and white flowing from his heart. Images of this vision, with the words, “Jesus, I trust in you,” were distributed worldwide. The image became known as “Jesus of the Divine Mercy” or the “Divine Mercy Image.” She began a diary in 1934 to tell the mystical story of the Divine Mercy image and devotions that developed from it:

“Jesus is commanding me to make a novena before the Feast of Mercy... for the conversion of the whole world and for the recognition of the Divine Mercy. [Jesus said that he wanted this novena prayed] “so that every soul will praise My goodness....

“Encourage souls to place great trust in My fathomless mercy. Let the weak, sinful soul have no fear to approach Me, for even if it had more sins than there are grains of sand in the world, all will be drowned in the...depths of My mercy” (Diary, 1059). †

## PRAYER

Risen Lord, your resurrection renewed the face of the earth and gave us hope. Make me eager to use my gifts and talents to rebuild the lives of others.

—From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

April 4–9

Mon. The Annunciation of the Lord: Isaiah 7:10–14; 8:10 / Hebrews 10:4–10 / Luke 1:26–38  
 Tue. Easter Weekday: Acts 4:32–37 / John 3:7b–15  
 Wed. Easter Weekday: Acts 5:17–26 / John 3:16–21

Thu. St. John Baptist de la Salle: Acts 5:27–33 / John 3:31–36  
 Fri. Easter Weekday: Acts 5:34–42 / John 6:1–15  
 Sat. Easter Weekday: Acts 6:1–7 / John 6:16–21