

First Reading: Acts 5:12-16
Response: “**Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love has no end**” (Ps.117:1)
Responsorial Psalm: 117:2-4,22-27
Second Reading: Revelation 1:9-13, 17-19
Gospel: John 20:19-31

The Risen Lord is closer to us than he ever was before his resurrection. His nearness is more than physical, it is deeply spiritual. His presence is around us and in us. He touches us and communicates, not simply through our bodies but within the very depths of our being.

This was the sense of the early Church, the faith of the faithful, *sensus fidelium*, an experience that no one could take away nor interfere. And “**many signs and wonders were worked among the people at the hands of the apostles**” (Acts 5:12)

We see the power of the resurrection in the early Church. It conquers death, sickness and human ailments. “**People came crowding, bringing with them their sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and all of them were cured**” (Acts 5:16).

Experiencing the love of God, a psalm of thanksgiving follows: “**Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love has no end**” (Ps.117:1). The psalm is prophetic of the Messiah who will be rejected by the people and yet become the “**corner stone**” (Ps. 117:22).

The psalm cries out יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא, *YHWH hoshi'ah na*, meaning *Yahweh save now*, “**O Lord grant us salvation**” (Ps.117:25). We see the fulfilment in the one whose name is salvation, Jesus. “**Blessed in the name of the Lord is he who comes**” (*Ibid.*).

He who comes is none other than the Messiah, our salvation, Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord. He comes into our present moment, the One who is “**the First and the Last, I am the Living One**” (*Apoc.1:18*).

This Messiah, our Saviour, is the same Jesus Christ who was crucified, dead and buried, now risen from the dead. “**I was dead and now I am to live forever and ever**” (*Apoc.1:19*)

Being with the Risen Lord and is not seeing him simply with the eyes of flesh but with the eyes of faith. “**Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe**” (*Jn:20:29*).

The early Christians celebrated the day of the Lord on the first day, Sunday, and “**eight days later**” (*Jn.20:26*), Sunday again. That is the day when they “**have seen the Lord**” (*Jn.20:25*) and “**received the Holy Spirit**” (*Jn.20:22*).

Read about the Risen Lord in the **Gospel**, what he says and what he does (*Jn.20:19-31*).

In the **Liturgy**, we are still within the Octave of Easter, celebrating the resurrection. Alleluia.

Tradition: Easter is the greatest feast of the year and has a special Octave. No other feast can ever supercede it nor impinge upon it. It is a special day of the Lord. (See **Life Experience** below).

Witness: Easter, the greatest Feast of the year, live it as the fullness of your week, from beginning to end, from the first day to the eighth day, not simply seven days but an Octave, eight days, Sunday to Sunday. Such is the way of the apostles, the octave way, the apostolic week.

FOR THE CHILDREN

The Gospel is a Resurrection story. We see the Risen Lord and the apostles (*Jn.20:19-31*). Every Sunday is the day of the Resurrection, Lord's Day, Eucharistic encounter with Christ. Give Teaching of why the first day is now the Lord's day, also the eighth day, both Sundays. Sing Alleluia. Capture the spirit of the Resurrection and talk about it. Christ is risen. (Witness)

FOR TEENAGERS (*Christian Praxis*)

My Present Action: *What is your understanding of Easter and resurrection?*

Your Story and Vision: *How important is it and what role does it play in your life?*

Church's Story: Give proclamation and teaching of Church on the resurrection.

Church's Story and Yours: Resurrection (Easter) is central to Church's faith and worship. *How much more can it be part of your life?*

Church's Vision and Yours: Celebrate the resurrection and new life with the Church.

RCIA

"Sunday is the day on which the paschal mystery is celebrated in the light of the apostolic tradition and is to be observed as the foremost holy day of obligation in the universal Church" (*CIC: can.1246 #1*). "The Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life" (*Catechism of Catholic Church #2177*).

LIFE EXPERIENCE

I wonder why the Feast of 'Divine Mercy', as revealed to St. Faustina, is placed within the Octave of Easter. Easter is paramount in the liturgy of the Church, the climax of the Triduum, showing God's tremendous love, sacrifice, power and glory. It is the joyful celebration of the 'Resurrection,' proclaiming the Risen Lord who saves his people. Alleluia! Certainly, it has many theological implications, such as 'divine love,' 'divine forgiveness' and 'divine mercy.' Such implications may deserve special attention but should not supercede the Feast of Easter itself. Easter is more than 'divine mercy; it is about God's power and glory. It is more than Christ forgiving; it is Christ living. Easter is more than pardoning; it is creating a whole new world. Ultimately, it reveals God as Love, not simply in terms of mercy to humanity but as Trinity, the Father gloriously raising His Son with the Breath of Life.

The Risen Lord, seen by the apostles and many others, is considered an apostolic norm of revelation. Faustina's revelation of 'Divine Mercy' is not the same. It is purely private. Mercy here, *qua misericordia*, implies *miseria*, misery, sin, where mercy is shown. The Divine Persons are more than mercy. They are love *per se*, with or without sinful humanity.

Faustina's revelation should not impinge upon the apostolic revelation of Easter. One cannot help but wonder at Pope John Paul II's decision of inserting another feast into the Easter Octave. Furthermore, how much is Faustina's vision culturally comparable the One incarnated in an Afro-Asian womb, "***out of Egypt I called my son***" (*Mt. 15:2*).

History proves some papal decisions are questionable. Pope Sixtus V, in 1590, promulgated his own translation of a bible with errors (*Editio Sistine*). Pope John XXIII, in 1962, promulgated '*Veterum Sapientia*', declaring students to be taught in Latin. It didn't work.

N.B: All papal documents are to be taken seriously, in virtue of the Sacred Office. Like Peter, the pope can be human, unless *ex cathedra*. *Ecclesia docens, Ecclesia discens* (the Church teaching is also Church learning (discerning)). One can wonder at the imposition of Faustina's private vision into the apostolic revelation and celebration of Easter and its Octave.

LITTLE ANGELINA

Angelina was turning the pages of her mother's new "*Liturgical Calendar for Southern Africa 2010*," with ecclesiastical approval. She was looking at the pictures of Jesus, portraying him as an African. What puzzled the little child was that the other pictures of Jesus in the house, showed him as European, especially the one of Divine Mercy in her mother's bedroom. In the child's mind and perhaps in our minds, is who is the real Jesus? Or like a chameleon, does he change his skin? My criterion would be what the apostles saw. Jesus' complexion must have been dark and sun-burned from desert, sea and sky, and hair well-blown in the wind. The apostles saw the same body after the resurrection, perhaps well-groomed, and whiter from the resurrection, with a good perm. Who knows? Maybe a theological compromise is the answer. Maybe he was Afro-Asian at Incarnation and European at Resurrection. Maybe we should just not theologize as experience shows. It can lead to liturgical confusion.

P.S. Members of my family and Angelina's are devotees of Divine Mercy. I have a preference for other devotions in the Church. Each has his/her inspiration and God-given space. Or am I just in the wrong place?

IMPORTANT WORDS: "Receive the Holy Spirit" (Jn.20:22)

"*He breathed on them and said "Receive the Holy Spirit"*" (Jn.20:22), the breath of true life. At the dawn of creation God breathed life into humankind. Now the Risen Lord breathes new life, marking a transition from the Old Covenant to the New. Jesus is recreating a whole new world, sin forgiven and grace restored. The Spirit that Jesus gave to his apostles is passed on through the ministry of the Church and we are the Church.

Watchword: "We have seen the Lord" (Jn.20:25)

Hebrew:	רָאָה רָאִינוּ אֶת־הָאֲדוֹן	Ra'oh ra'inu eth-h'Adon.
Greek:	Ἐώρακαμεν τον Κυριον.	Heorakamen ton Kurion.
Latin:	Vidimus Dominum!	
Spanish:	Al Señor hemos visto.	
Portuguese:	Vimos o Senhor.	
French:	Nous avon vu le Seigneur.	
German:	Wir haben den Herrn gesehen.	
Afrikaans:	Ons het die Here gesien!	
Zulu:	Siyibonile iNkosi.	
Xhosa:	Siyibonile iNkosi.	
Sotho:	Re bone Morena.	
Irish:	Chonnaic muid an Tiarna.	