

We come today to mark an end

But it is also a beginning

We have just spent the Triduum

The last 3 days of Holy Week with Christ

As he went through his passion

His being deserted by his closest followers

His condemnation for our sins

His scourging and passion

His crucifixion and death

Good Friday and Holy Saturday

The only 2 days in the year we have no Mass

Then the Easter Vigil

The new light coming into the world and in our churches

The new life of baptisms, confirmations and first Communions

Easter morning

The empty tomb

With Mary, seeking her Lord

With the Disciples as they discovered it was just as she said

But they didn't find him

All week, we had readings about the resurrection

From a variety of people and varying points of view

To today

When we see the apostles' gathered together

Still afraid

Still hiding out

Not really knowing what to do

Until Christ enters though locked doors

And enters not only the room

But their hearts

Today is the eighth day of Easter

Liturgically, it is still Easter Day

We celebrate the resurrection for 8 days

In ancient times, the newly baptized would still wear baptismal gowns

Putting them away after today

After today, we go back to a more normal routine

The high drama is gone

The liturgies are still festive

But not to the same degree of Easter morning

So much of the outward expression is finished

And now we let what we have celebrated take root

It is a time of deepening our faith life

Being able to see Christ in new and marvelous ways

To see how our Risen Lord comes to us in the Liturgy of the Word

Letting the written and preached Word enter our hearts

Challenge our points of views

Like the Apostles in our reading from Acts

This was after Pentecost

But the church was still in its infancy

They are growing and discovering what it means to be Christian

What it means to be a Church

How Christ speaks to them and us through the sacraments

At every baptism, he calls forth a new disciple

At every confirmation, he is strengthening a soldier of Christ

Calling them to a specific mission in this life

At every Eucharist he is offering himself to us

Giving himself to be our food and strength to face our week ahead

At every Confession

Giving his forgiveness and mercy

And giving the grace needed to avoid sin

At every marriage, creating a covenant between 2 people and God

A covenant that cannot be broken

Because it is made in the image of Christ and his Church

At every ordination

Transmitting his priesthood to ordinary men

Called from families and communities to serve families and communities

At every anointing of the sick

Bringing comfort, dignity and grace to those in need

Especially to those preparing for their final journey in this life

His Word

His Sacraments

His Church

These are Christ's life

They are his gift to us

But not only for us

But more importantly, they are for the world

For those that have not heard of Christ

For those that have been hurt and have turned away

For those that are seeking for meaning and love

For those of our families and friends not here with us

We are to take the sacraments with us when we leave

And bring them to the world

That is really what is behind our feast today

Divine Mercy Sunday

For what is mercy?

It is not feeling sorry for another

It is not pity

It can be defined as love's response to suffering

The incarnate Christ is the Father's Mercy

He is God's response to human suffering

Directed especially at the root of all suffering

Sin

Before Original Sin

There was no suffering in the Garden of Eden

There was no death

Sin is a foothold for Satan into our lives

It robs us of our dignity

Weakens and destroys our connection with the source of life

Our heavenly Father

God saw all this

And in his mercy, He sent his only Son

And the Risen Christ sends us

He came into the locked room

He enters our locked hearts

As the Father sent me

So I send you

His instructions to his disciples

Are his instructions to us as well

He was sent on a mission of mercy

We are sent on a mission of mercy

He gave his authority to forgive to his Church

Receive the Holy Spirit

If you forgive men's sins, they are forgiven

If you hold them bound they are held bound

We all have our roles

We all have our mission

Christ's Sacraments are for the salvation of the world

His Sacraments are given life through the ministry of the Church

Through the lives of Christian faithful

We have to be his missionaries

Inviting our brothers and sisters

Our friends and neighbors

So the entire world can experience the gift of the Risen Christ

The gift of Divine Mercy in our hearts