

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This is Divine Mercy Sunday. Every year, we hear the same Gospel from John 20:19-31. After Jesus rises from the dead, He visits the disciples, but Thomas is not with them. The following week, Jesus appears to all the disciples, including Thomas, whom He invites to examine His nail marks and put his hand into His side.

This picture, *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas*, by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio speaks shockingly of the



*fleshiness* of the Resurrection. Jesus practically drags Thomas' hand into His side. We often don't think of the reality of Resurrection in this very tangible way. And yet, this is the reality – Jesus was brutally killed, and the Gospels are clear that the marks of this death were still present, visible, touchable in His resurrected Body.

There is something both awe-inspiring and unnerving about this reality. And what should blow our minds the most is that this reality is meant for each of us! God has promised us resurrection. We proclaim

this at the end of the Apostle's Creed, the belief in "the resurrection of the body," not just Christ's Body, but every-body!

As I gaze on this picture, I see the incredible mercy of God! Jesus could have been upset with Thomas. He could have given him a hard time for not believing when the ten Apostles, and others, told him that Jesus had risen. Instead, Jesus gives Thomas the grace to believe – the very things he said that he needed to believe: **"Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe"** (John 20:25). This grace then transformed Saint Thomas so much, that, despite the fact that he is now called "Doubting Thomas," he is the first of the Disciples to proclaim the full truth of Jesus' Divinity: **"My Lord and my God!"** (John 20:28).

One of the prayers associated with the Divine Mercy devotion is **"O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fountain of Mercy for us, I trust in You!"** These words speak about what happened after the soldier thrust his spear into the side of Christ – Blood and Water flowed out (see John 19:34). The Church has interpreted this as the fount of mercy pouring out from Jesus' side: the water as the source of Baptism, and the Blood as the Eucharist. These two gifts (Baptism and Eucharist), more than any others, draw us into the mercy and mystery of Christ. And, as seen in the Caravaggio, Thomas probes into the source of this mercy.

When I look at this, I get the sense that Jesus so desires for us to enter into His Heart. As he practically drags Thomas in, He is calling us, drawing us, leading us into His mercy, into His Heart. The prayer the *Anima Christi*, says to Christ, **"Within Your wounds, hide me."**

On this Divine Mercy Sunday, may we be filled with love of God. May we allow Jesus to draw us into His mercy. May we truly hide within His wounds, protected from all evil. May we probe His side, from whence Blood and Water flowed, and be washed clean of all of our sins.