

## Second Sunday of Easter / Divine Mercy Sunday Reflection by Fr. John —

Happy second week of Easter! Keep celebrating it, this Good News that Jesus's Resurrection brings us disciples, that we're heaven-bound. It's such important news, that in the Catholic Tradition we celebrate Easter for seven weeks. The coronavirus can't take that away from us!

The First Reading for Divine Mercy Sunday discusses the idyllic days of the early Church, when all these first Christians in Jerusalem shared everything they had with each other according to their needs. For a brief period, part of humankind lived the way God originally intended for Adam and Eve's descendants. But this pure, theological communism didn't last for long, although the Church has never forgotten to preach the importance of us to share our gifts with the poor.

That goes for the greatest gift we have received, too: salvation through the Divine Mercy of Jesus Christ. In this weekend's Second Reading, St. Peter praises God because the Resurrection of Jesus gives us undying hope to a heavenly inheritance that will become evident to unbelievers at the end of time. We won't mock them with "we told you so" because our love will be perfected; We will be sorry for them and happy for ourselves.

St. Peter recognizes (as I mentioned in last week's homily) that our prospect for salvation gives us an underlying and enduring joy even when we are struggling either with our own problems or from the hurts imposed by others on us (physical or mental). When we cling to Christ as our *Messiah*, we will reach our goal of eternal life with God. If we can show our joy during our struggles instead of keeping it to ourselves, someone is bound to ask "How can you be so joyful?" and we can tell them that it's because of our Christian faith, that gets us through.

We struggle with this evangelization today because those of us over 50 anyway were raised in a Western Civilization where most people were Christian and we never felt a need to spread the Good News. That's no longer the case. Half of our nation is pagan now, and if we know some of those people, we may be the only portal for their conversion.

What we have to get over is feeling a need to evangelize perfectly. I think that's the problem for us Catholics. It's not a problem for our Protestant brethren. They recognize their imperfection and spread the Good News anyway, confident that God will take care of their shortcomings. Let's ask God to help us get there, too. Let's pray we recognize our opportunity when a friend or acquaintance mentions a problem or challenge they're facing; that's when another door opens for us.