

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter – Divine Mercy

Acts 2:42-47  
Ps 118:1-4,13-15,22-24  
1 Peter 1:3-9  
John 20:19-31

### Monday April 20

Acts 4:23-31  
Ps 2:1-9  
John 3:1-8

### Tuesday April 21

Acts 4:32-37  
Ps 93:1-2,5  
John 3:7b-15

### Wednesday April 22

Acts 5:17-26  
Ps 34:2-9  
John 3:16-21

### Thursday April 23

Acts 5:27-33  
Ps 34:2,9,17-20  
John 3:31-36

### Friday April 24

Acts 5:34-42  
Ps 27:1,4,13-14  
John 6:1-15

### Saturday April 25

**St. Mark**  
1 Peter 5:5b-14  
Ps 89:2-3,6-7,16-17  
Mark 16:15-20

We are an Easter people, because we know and celebrate that Jesus has risen from the dead. And yet, we don't always feel like celebrating.

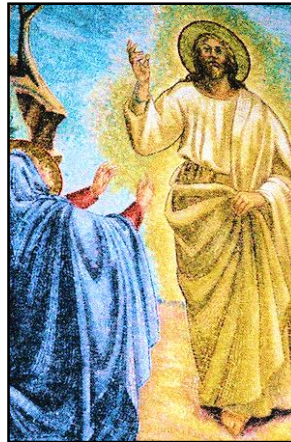
It's hard to feel like the Good Friday experience of carrying our crosses has really ended.

Today's second reading describes what the Easter experience is supposed to feel like: an indescribable and glorious joy. But how does that happen?

The attitude of joy does not come from reaching the end of our cross-like burdens. Rather, it comes from knowing that Christ's death and resurrection have overcome our crosses, and by uniting ourselves to his life, we are victorious even before we see the battle end.

Furthermore, it comes from knowing that we have the ultimate victory – eternal life in God's abundant love – and we know that this gift is "imperishable, undefiled, and unfading" and that it's being safeguarded by the power of God because, by choosing to have faith in Christ, we have accepted the gift in advance.

This joy-from-knowing is the definition of "hope". Hope isn't wishful thinking. Hope means celebrating what is certainly going to happen *before* it happens.



Some Catholics say that they're afraid they might lose their salvation because they're afraid that something will tempt them to turn away from Jesus between now and the hour of death. If you worry about this, let me ask you: During times of suffering, do you reject God or run to him?

Even when we get angry at God, we're actually very close to him. We're angry because we believe in him and trust him and he seems to be disappointing us. This is normal: Our faith is purified by our trials.

To embrace life as an Easter people, we must learn to remember that our sufferings are temporary and that someday we will enter into eternal joy. This is what we celebrate even while carrying our crosses.

### Reflect & Discuss:

1. In what ways has God apparently disappointed you? What is he doing (or not doing) that's upsetting you? How is this increasing your closeness to him, even if it feels like he's silent and distant?
2. Give an example of wishful thinking: What have you wished for in prayer? What have you been begging God to do? How is this different than hoping (joy-from-knowing)? Even if your wish never comes true, what's your reason for a higher hope?