

- *“Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”*
- What a wonderful Gospel passage today as we celebrate the reception of First Holy Communion for our young ones... especially on Divine Mercy Sunday.
- And congratulations, young ones, in receiving your 1st Communion today...and welcome to all of you who have come to celebrate this day with them—this, by far, the greatest of all sacraments—the sacrament of sacraments, and the ultimate sacrament of God’s mercy.
- This is one of the greatest days of your life—the day that you first receive Jesus Himself in that wonderful sacrament—becoming even more intimately part of the Body of Christ.
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- Today we remember two of the greatest sacraments of mercy—confession and, most of all, of course, the Eucharist.
- Why confession? We just heard the risen Jesus tell the apostles: *“Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained,”*...and the Church—guided by the Holy Spirit—has ever interpreted that Jesus giving His power to the Church to forgive sins through her ministers.
- So, young ones...never fear confession; it’s a wonderful sacrament of cleansing forgiveness. It’s like taking a warm shower after falling into a cold mud puddle.
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- You do not yet realize the greatness of this day...and, really, none of us can truly grasp the greatness of the Eucharist and of our communion with Jesus—God—when we receive this wonderful sacrament...

- ...for the Mass is the sacrifice Christ offered once for all on the cross ever present...for which we give thanks with all our hearts. The word “Eucharist” itself means “thanksgiving”.
- And when a priest consecrates it, that little wafer is no longer bread...the liquid in the cup is no longer wine...but they are really the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Himself...what we call the Real Presence of Christ—to give us tons of grace to do the good...to be like Him.
- *“But it still looks like, smells like, tastes like, bread and wine!”*
- Yes, but Jesus—who is God—assures us with His own word: *“This IS my body; this IS my blood.”*
- So we know it must be His Body and Blood, for He is God, who in His absolute holiness and goodness cannot lie or deceive.
- And what God says MUST be.
- And because it IS Him, the Mass is where Heaven touches earth... because Jesus humbles Himself to come down to this very altar—and on every altar in the world—at every Mass.

- Jesus, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, created all things—the whole universe!—and yet He humbles Himself to be in that little wafer... to be with YOU. He loves you that much.
- That why it’s so important to always do good and to follow what Jesus teaches us. He is the source of all good, and what He teaches us is always for our good...because He wants only good for us.
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- So...always do what is right and good, and run from evil...because God loves you so very dearly. He knows what is best for us...because He made us, after all.

- That's why He leaves us the Church: to teach us His Way... and it is only His way that leads us to true happiness.
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- *(excerpts from the children's letters)*
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- Parents: the common theme in almost all the letters is how much they want to emulate you, and for you to be proud of them.
- So set the example— always seeking the right yourselves... remembering that Mass on Sundays is our obligation, but more so our privilege...and always avoid evil. Use that free will that God gave you only for good.
- For as goes the parent, so goes the child. The hand that rocks the cradle...
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- And, young ones...rest in His love on this your 1st Communion day...and stay with Him always...and He will bless you all today and every day...and keep you ever close to His heart.

Reading 1 [ACTS 2:42-47](#)

They devoted themselves
to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life,
to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.
Awe came upon everyone,
and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.
All who believed were together and had all things in common;
they would sell their property and possessions
and divide them among all according to each one's need.
Every day they devoted themselves
to meeting together in the temple area
and to breaking bread in their homes.
They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart,
praising God and enjoying favor with all the people.
And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Responsorial Psalm [PS 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24](#)

R. (1) **Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, his love is everlasting.**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

Let the house of Israel say,
"His mercy endures forever."

Let the house of Aaron say,
"His mercy endures forever."

Let those who fear the LORD say,
"His mercy endures forever."

R. **Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, his love is everlasting.**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

I was hard pressed and was falling,
but the LORD helped me.
My strength and my courage is the LORD,
and he has been my savior.

The joyful shout of victory
in the tents of the just:

R. **Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, his love is everlasting.**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

First Holy Communion 2017
(Year A—2nd Sunday of Easter)

The stone which the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.

By the LORD has this been done;
it is wonderful in our eyes.

This is the day the LORD has made;
let us be glad and rejoice in it.

R. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, his love is everlasting.

or:

R. Alleluia.

Reading 2 1 PT 1:3-9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading,
kept in heaven for you
who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith,
to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time.
In this you rejoice, although now for a little while
you may have to suffer through various trials,
so that the genuineness of your faith,
more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire,
may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor
at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
Although you have not seen him you love him;
even though you do not see him now yet believe in him,
you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy,
as you attain the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Alleluia JN 20:29

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

You believe in me, Thomas, because you have seen me, says the Lord;
blessed are they who have not seen me, but still believe!

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel [JN 20:19-31](#)

On the evening of that first day of the week,
when the doors were locked, where the disciples were,
for fear of the Jews,
Jesus came and stood in their midst
and said to them, "Peace be with you."
When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.
The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.
Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you.
As the Father has sent me, so I send you."
And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,
"Receive the Holy Spirit.
Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them,
and whose sins you retain are retained."

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve,
was not with them when Jesus came.
So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord."
But he said to them,
"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."

Now a week later his disciples were again inside
and Thomas was with them.
Jesus came, although the doors were locked,
and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you."
Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands,
and bring your hand and put it into my side,
and do not be unbelieving, but believe."
Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!"
Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me?
Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples
that are not written in this book.
But these are written that you may come to believe
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,
and that through this belief you may have life in his name.