**2nd Sunday of Easter, Cycle B**

**April 11/12, 2015**

**Acts 4: 32-35; 1 John 5: 1-6; John 20: 19-31**

“The community of believers was of one heart and mind.” (Acts 4: 32)

One mind and one heart. What was it that united them in such an evident way, a way that seems hidden in today’s Church?

It was love, Divine Love, who impelled them to love each other and united them one to another.

Indeed, the ancient pagan historians made note of this in their writing. They marveled at the unity of Christians and how they loved each other, and how they expressed that love by giving to each other their material possessions, and how they were willing to die because of their love for God.

What will unite us as a Church, as a world, in 2015? It will be love. Only Divine Love can truly unite us. If love does not unite us, then only sin will seem to unite us, and the unity of sin is very fragile, dark, and false. If God doesn’t unite us, then the devil will offer us a false unity, and we don’t want that.

But, my friends, we are blind to the presence of Divine Love if we do not have faith. Faith illuminates the presence of Love. It is faith that allows us to see the love that is in our midst, truly present always in our lives, in our marriages, in our families, in our world and in our Church. Without faith, we are blind to the presence of God’s love here and now.

We hear in the Gospel today that Thomas was apart from the community that day. He was, if you will, not in union with the others the day the Risen Lord appeared. Even when they told him about the risen Jesus, he didn’t believe, he didn’t have faith, and because of his faithlessness, he was in conflict, conflict within himself and at conflict with the Church. He was blind to the presence of Jesus, to the Divine Presence, to Love.

Jesus, though, in his mercy, healed Thomas’ conflict and faithlessness. As soon as Thomas believed, his eyes were opened and he recognized the Risen Lord. With his new-found faith, he recognized the Love of God before him, and he was back into union with God and the Church.

This account of Thomas teaches us two things. The first is that we too have a choice, a decision to make. It is the choice for or against faith. If we choose against faith, then we choose conflict, division, and blindness. It is a choice to be in separation from the Church, from God, and from our trues selves. It is a choice for disunity and darkness to the presence of Love. If we choose to believe, then we choose union, community, peace, clarity, and love.

Have you ever met anyone who does not believe in the Resurrection? I have. They are faithless in regard to one thing, the most central thing of Christianity, namely that Jesus, the Son of God, rose from dead and lives. They are unable to see God’s love that is present in the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus, and they live without hope in eternity.

The second thing we learn from the account of Thomas is this: God extend His mercy to us over and over again, to heal us and to forgive us and to bring us back to faith. This is Divine Mercy Sunday, after all, and today’s Gospel brings this mercy into evidence.

Only love will unite us, Divine Love, but faith makes evident to us the love of God already present to us. Faith illuminates, makes evident, the love of God right in front of us and all around us each and every day. Love is always present even in the darkest of hours, because love is of God. Indeed, God is love, and God is always present. Always!

Thomas had a choice and so do we. He had to decide to believe or not believe. He first chose unbelief which resulted in conflict and disunity and a desperate need of God’s mercy and healing. Thomas then chose to believe and with that he was extended mercy, healing and sight. He found love and his resurrected Lord.

Choose faith, my people! Choose to believe! Your eyes will be opened. Faith is not blind. Quite the opposite: Faith sees and sees clearly. With that clarity of vision you can bask in the warmth of God’s love.

Remember, always remember, that God’s mercy is offered to you if and when you fall, when you break faith, when you sin. God’s mercy is freely offered to you.

On this Divine Mercy Sunday, we beg God’s mercy as we go forward to live our lives in faith in the Risen Lord, relying as we do on his love.