

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY 2021

Christ is risen! Indeed he is risen! 3x

In today's Gospel it is the evening of what we now call Easter Sunday and ten of the apostles are hiding behind locked doors.

Judas has killed himself and we don't know where Thomas is.

Their leader and their friend, Jesus, has been put to death, and the apostles are afraid that the same thing might happen to them.

We can also imagine that they are overwhelmed with guilt for having abandoned Jesus.

Peter especially must feel the weight of his cowardly three denials.

Then, all of a sudden, the Jesus whom they mourn is standing in their midst.

The Risen Lord does not scold them for unfaithfulness, rather he says to them, "Peace be with you."

He shows them his hands marked with the wounds of crucifixion, and his side pierced by the soldier's lance.

Even after the Resurrection his wounds remain as signs of the depth of his love.

He suffered those wounds for the salvation of his first disciples and for all who would come to believe in him.

Jesus enters a locked room filled with fear, guilt, and doubt, and brings the gift of his peace and forgiveness.

But it is not enough that the Risen Lord shows such great mercy to the apostles; he also empowers and commissions them to bring that same peace and reconciliation to others.

Jesus breathes upon the apostles - and through them, upon the Church in every age - the gift of the Holy Spirit to be poured out over the whole world.

As were the apostles, so now we are invited to become partners in his work of salvation, of bringing peace, hope, and mercy to others.

One important way we can do this is through our participation in our annual Catholic Services Appeal.

Our pledge of sacrificial giving to the CSA enables the Church of the Diocese of Gary to carry on the mission of Jesus through its various offices including:

- Catholic Education,
- Youth and Adult Faith Formation,
- The Marriage Tribunal and Family Life
- Vocations and Priestly Life
- And Catholic Charities.

The CSA also funds several important national collections, including those for:

- retired priests and religious,
- the protection of the Church in the Holy Land,
- and the support of the Pope's ministry.

Furthermore, the CSA Campaign is an opportunity for our parish to raise funds for special projects.

All of the money we contribute beyond the fulfillment of our parish CSA goal is returned to the parish.

I have to take this opportunity to thank everyone who participated in last year's abbreviated CSA campaign.

It is amazing that, even in the midst of COVID, your generosity made it possible for us to not only reach our goal of \$43,250 but to surpass it by over \$14,000.

And because we reached our goal we also received from the Diocese a 10 % rebate of \$4,325.

We used that money above and beyond our goal to paint Vamos Hall and to upgrade our Wi-Fi capabilities as well as the hall's sound and video equipment.

I am hoping that this year our sacrificial stewardship will provide the extra funds needed to replace the carpeting in the church in anticipation of our parish's 75th anniversary next year.

Psalm 116 asks the question, "What return can I make to the Lord for all that he has done for me?"

In the death and resurrection of his Son, God the Father freely bestows upon us the gift of salvation accomplished by the sacrifice of Christ.

What return can I make to the Lord for such a gift?

How will my contribution to this year's Catholic Services Appeal reflect the depth of my gratitude to God for all of his merciful blessings?

And so, on this Divine Mercy Sunday, we give thanks to our Risen Lord for showering his graces upon us.

With our voices and with our lives we proclaim the foundation of our faith:

Christ is risen! Indeed he is risen! 3x