

Blessed Are Those Who Have Not Seen

Divine Mercy Sunday

John 20:19-31

“Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

This is the key phrase, the key revelation for today.

Let us first situate, however, where we are in these amazing,
amazingly mysterious appearances after the Resurrection of Jesus.

According to John, prior to this appearance,
only Mary Magdalene had seen Jesus.

The gospels, in fact, unanimously
present Mary Magdalene as the first to see Jesus.

Why Mary Magdalene? One would expect that it be Peter.

One would expect that Jesus go to the chief,
out of respect for order, and set things straight.

Why Mary Magdalene?

I like to think that Jesus first goes where hearts thirst most.

Mary Magdalene was in love with Jesus—in love, in the deep sense.

After Mary Magdalene, Jesus appears to the Apostles,
who are locked in a room, seized by fear.

They are in Jerusalem.

The name—*Yoreh Shalom*—can literally mean “rain of peace”.

What does Jesus say to them?

“Peace be with you”. Hmm: how wonderful.

In a sense, Jesus declares Himself, in the mystery of His resurrection,
as the accomplishment of peace.

The Resurrection, the manifestation of the victory of divine love over death,
introduces humanity into *the* greatest intimacy with God,
the fruit of which is peace.

What are the implications of the Resurrection for each of us?

Intimacy with God, and its great fruit, peace.

Jesus mercifully comes to the Apostles, to reassure them.
Actually, Jesus does more than reassure them.
He indeed communicates peace and allows them to touch his hands and side.
But He goes beyond reassurance.
He breathes the Holy Spirit upon them,
 granting them authority to forgive sins.
They are made into instruments of extreme mercy.
Forgiveness is extreme mercy.

There is, of course, one bad apple in the group (there always seems to be).
There is good old Doubting Thomas
—whose presence is strangely reassuring for us, who, at times, doubt.
“I will not believe,” he says.
Jesus responds, “Put your finger here, see...do not be unbelieving.”
Although much art work portrays it as having occurred,
we are unsure if Thomas actually touched Jesus’ wounds.
What moved Thomas were not the wounds, but the mercy:
 “My Lord and my God!”
Jesus welcomes him in his unbelief.

Jesus then proceeds to proclaim the beatitude, the blessedness of faith.
“Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”
In faith, we touch the Risen Lord.
Do we believe it? Do we believe it?
Let us believe that we do, and let us believe and indeed touch the Lord.
One day we will *see* the Risen lord, and it is *very* normal to want to see Him.
In the meantime, however, in the dark valley, we already touch Him, truly.
If so, there is infinite joy.
There is joy when we touch the one we love.
When the One we touch is infinite love, there is infinite joy.
No one and nothing, no circumstance, no feeling of isolation
 can keep us from touching God.
Touch and rejoice!