

[Acts 5:12-16; Ps. 118; Rev.1:9-11a, 12-13. 17-19; John 20:19-31]

The pending death of Pope Francis was no surprise. But, one day, Easter Sunday, Pope Francis appears in the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica to give his Urbi et Orbi blessing to the City of Rome and to the World and then is driven around St. Peter's Square in the Pope Mobile. The next day, he dies in the morning hours of Easter Monday, within 24 hours. That is a shock!

We are now in a whirlwind of change – from single, isolated parishes to a “Family of Parishes,” with a new Archbishop of Detroit, with a new President of the United States, and soon, with a new Pope.

In a way, this present scenario of massive change resembles the massive changes that take place in Jerusalem thousands of years ago. In the new fledgling Christian Church. In the hearts and lives of the Apostles, disciples and Mary, the Mother of Jesus. All this following His Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension to the Father that took place during that first Holy Week and Easter so long ago.

During these turbulent days of transition and change, let us hold on to the rock and anchor of our faith, as pilgrims of hope, as joyful, missionary disciples of love. Like the Apostles in the Early Church, we may not have silver or gold, but let us offer what we do have. The ability to, as Pope Francis said so many times, “accompany one another” as Jesus does with the disciples on the Road to Emmaus. Jesus Christ is Risen! He is truly Risen!

Jorge Mario Bergoglio was baptized into Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord. Pope Francis dedicated his whole life to preaching this message. A message of inclusion and mercy. Now we pray for the rest and peace of his eternal soul. Eternal Rest grant unto Pope Francis, O Lord,...

In drama, conflicted characters generally are more interesting. If Hamlet had had a clear conscience, a definite sense of purpose, then the tragedy would have ended quickly. In fact, it wouldn't have been a tragedy. Perhaps it's our fascination with such conflict that draws our attention to the figure of St. Thomas on the Second Sunday of Easter.

Thomas isn't there when Christ appears to the disciples on the first Easter Sunday, bestowing peace. One could imagine the conflict that he experiences. Why did Jesus appear without me present? Are my friends just making this up? He is more than a "Doubting Thomas" here. He is a "Pouting Thomas." Jesus has mercy on Thomas in his affliction. Our Lord appears a week later. To show mercy to Thomas. Now Thomas believes. Now, he is a "Shouting Thomas!" He will proclaim the Christian Faith all the way to India. And it will cost him his life.

How are we conflicted just like Thomas? Have we not longed for some consolation from God in the midst of our suffering? In the doubts we've experienced about God's very existence and life itself? But let's look again. In Acts, we hear about that first Christian community in Jerusalem. Gathered together in unity. One heart. One voice. Sharing all things in common, because they have been gathered together by the same love made manifest in the wounds of Our Lord.

God knows your needs: He desires to bring you closer to Himself, and He will do so as long as you keep striving and stumbling towards Him.

God is only as far away as we place Him, and never as far away as we think. For it is in Him that we live, move and have our being.

So run with Thomas to the side of Christ. Run, don't walk.

And don't forget your ABC'S of God's Divine Mercy:

Ask for mercy. Be merciful to others. Completely trust in God.