

## SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

### DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

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

#### HOMILY

Today's gospel introduces us to a group of fearful disciples. We know that fear can be very disabling; holding us back from saying or doing things we know are the right thing to do. The disciples fear those who put Jesus to death, suspecting that they could be next on the line. Yes, it was already Easter Sunday, but the experience of it had not come their way. The shadow of Golgotha still dominated in their minds. The risen Lord comes to these fearful disciples. The evangelist simply states: *'He stood among them'*. Standing is often a sign of strength and confidence. For example we speak of people 'standing on their own feet', or 'standing their ground.' The Lord stood 'with all the strength of his risen life,' a life that no one could take from him. Here is the sign of strength and confidence which the disciples badly needed at that time. Rather than standing, the disciples were cowering at that stage. They were trying to make themselves small and even invisible. In standing among them, the Lord is erasing their fears giving them a hint of joy, lifting them from weakness to strength' empowering them to rise from their self-imposed imprisonment and turning them into confident messengers of the Easter Good News.

#### APPLICATION

For us today, fear can prevent us from witnessing to our faith. The culture in which we live often conveys the message to us that our faith is something very private, our faith is to be given expression to only behind the closed doors of our churches. There is a terrible intolerance of any public expression of faith. In such a climate, we can be fearful about 'giving public witness to our faith in the Lord.' We may be committed to the values of the Lord's gospel, but we can be tempted to hide that commitment from others, fearing ridicule or rejection if we declare where we really stand. We need the risen Lord to stand among us as much as the first disciples did.

The celebration of Easter assures us that the Risen Lord wants to stand among us, to give us renewed courage to witness to our faith in the places where we live and work. The seven-week Easter season is a time to draw strength' from the Risen Lord who stands among us. It is a season when we are invited to pray: *'Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life anew'*.