



Renew My Church: Seven Signs of Mission Vitality

“We support each other in knowing Christ more deeply.”

Reflection on the Second Sunday of Easter (Sunday of Divine Mercy)

Renew My Church is an Archdiocesan initiative that recognizes a parish “strives to evangelize its members to live more fully as intentional disciples.”

One way of doing this is to reflect on, take to heart, and enact Gospel messages. Today is the Second Sunday of the Easter Season which is also called the Sunday of Divine Mercy. The Gospel reading relates Jesus’ resurrected appearance to his disciples and his instructive dialogue with Thomas (Jn. 20:19-31).

Among its many messages, this story urges us to understand and embrace peace. The resurrected Christ connects to his disciples twice with the word, “Peace.”

The first-time the disciples had locked the doors out of fear.

Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, ‘**Peace be with you.**’ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

The disciples grasped that Jesus entered death with a life that transcended death; and by saying “Peace” he was offering them that same life to calm their fears of suffering and death which was the reason they had locked the doors.

The second-time Jesus addresses them with “Peace,” he tells them they are sent from the Father as he is to overcome divisions among people. To impel this mission, he breathes on them and imparts the Holy Spirit as the energy of new life. This new life is the power of forgiveness that will bring unity.

In our Eucharistic celebration, we offer one another the “Peace of Christ.” This is a peace that, on one level, calms our fear of suffering and death and, on another level, engages us in the struggle to unify the deep divides of our world.

When we say, “Peace of Christ,” to one another and we have this inner disposition, we become intentional disciples who, in the language of **Renew My Church**, “support each other in knowing Christ more deeply.”

