



## Second Sunday of Easter [Divine Mercy Sunday]

† Sunday 28th April 2019

England & Wales Cycle of Prayer: new members of the Church  
Keynote: Today he is risen! This day we rejoice and are glad!

### Acts of the Apostles 5: 12-16

*'The faithful used to meet by common consent in the Portico of Solomon. No one else ever dared to join them, but the people were loud in their praise and the numbers of men and women who came to believe in the Lord increased steadily...'* so we get a glimpse of the early Christian community and learn that, *'Many signs and wonders were worked among the people at the hands of the apostles... people even came crowding in from the towns round about Jerusalem, bringing with them their sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and all of them were cured.'* The disciples of Jesus still meet *'by common consent... loud in their praise (of the Lord)'*, and to this day numbers of men and women *'come to believe in the Lord'*.

**Responsorial Psalm 117 (118)** – A processional song of praise and thanksgiving. Alleluia!

### Book of Revelation 1: 9-13, 17-19

*'My name is John... I was on the island of Patmos for having preached God's word and witnessed for Jesus; It was the Lord's day and the Spirit possessed me, and I heard a voice behind me... and when I turned I saw... a figure like a Son of Man.'* So John describes this vision or encounter with God. In words that remind us of other theophanies recorded in the scriptures, or of the accounts of the meetings with the risen Lord, John continues: *'When I saw him, I fell in a dead faint, but he touched me with his right hand and said: "Do not be afraid; it is I, the First and the Last; I am the Living One. I was dead and now I to live for ever and ever."* There is at once a sense of intimacy in this meeting, and a sense of wonderment in the presence of the holiness and majesty of God. A reminder as we walk upon the earth now, that the Lord promised: *'Know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'* [Matt 28:20]

### Gospel according to John 20: 19-31

Since earliest times, Christians have met on the first day of the week to celebrate and recall the resurrection of the Lord. Indeed, this day, Sunday, is often referred to as a 'Little Easter Day!' The sudden presence of Jesus in the upper room, where the doors were locked, does tell us that the risen Christ was in some way different. Yet, in spite of this his disciples and friends recognise Jesus as he stood among them and showed them his hands and his side. *'The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord... and he said to them again, "Peace be with you"'*. This gospel passage, tells us of two of the post resurrection appearances of Jesus. In the first, Jesus gives the disciples their mission, *'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you...'* he breathed on them and said, *'Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven.'* The disciples are to continue the mission Jesus received from the Father. In the second appearance, we have the profound expression of faith by the 'doubting' Thomas who was absent on the first occasion, and clearly needed to see things for himself. After Thomas has placed his fingers in the marks of the nails, Jesus says to Thomas, *'Doubt no longer but believe.'* So we are invited to faith, and with Thomas we too can say, *'My Lord and my God!'*

© Peter J Harrison 2019