

## Mercy as the Mark of the Risen Church

In **Acts 5:12–16**, the Church, newly born in the power of the Resurrection and the Holy Spirit, becomes a vessel of divine mercy. The Apostles, particularly Peter, are healing the sick and restoring the broken. Even Peter’s **shadow** becomes an instrument of healing. This shadow represents more than physical relief—it reflects the radiating mercy of Christ now embodied in His Church.

The early Church, forged in the fire of Pentecost, showed what mercy looks like in action: **restoring dignity, healing the wounded, and welcoming the broken.**

### ◆ The Church Fathers on Mercy

St. **Gregory the Great** (Homilies on the Gospels 26) taught that the signs and wonders of the Apostles “are not to be marveled at only for their power, but to be imitated in their purpose” — namely, compassion for the suffering. The Fathers did not separate the miraculous from the moral: to be Christian is to **extend Christ’s healing love**, especially in moral and spiritual brokenness.

St. **John Chrysostom** emphasized that mercy is not optional. He said, *“If you want to receive mercy, show mercy to your neighbor”* (Homily on Matthew 23). This echoes the Psalmist’s cry in **Psalm 118**, *“His mercy endures forever”*—a divine attribute we are called to mirror.

### ◆ A Culture Quick to Condemn

Despite this scriptural and patristic clarity, modern society—especially digital platforms—has become a place where mercy is often absent. Social media is frequently a space of **instant judgment, outrage cycles, and public shaming.**

Consider the phenomenon of “cancel culture.” A single past mistake—sometimes decades old—is unearthed and becomes the grounds for total condemnation. No context. No invitation to repentance. No path to reconciliation.

This is the opposite of Divine Mercy.

### ◆ Real-Life Example: The Power of Mercy in Action

A few years ago, a young woman named **Justine** (name changed) made an inappropriate joke on social media before boarding a plane. By the time she landed, the post had gone viral, and she was globally shamed and fired. But what changed her life was not the criticism—it was the private message she received from someone who said: “What you said was wrong, but I’ve been there. If you ever want to talk, I’m here.”

That message began her healing. That was mercy: not condoning sin, but **inviting conversion.**

The Church, too, offers such mercy—most especially through **Confession**. As the Catechism teaches:

“The confession (or disclosure) of sins, even from a simply human point of view, frees us and facilitates our reconciliation with others... It is the encounter with God’s mercy” (CCC 1455).

#### ◆ **The Call of Divine Mercy Sunday**

On this day, we remember that Christ came not to condemn the world but to **save it** (John 3:17). The Church becomes most truly Herself when She reflects this mission—especially through us, her members.

St. **Faustina Kowalska**, the Apostle of Divine Mercy, heard these words from Jesus:

*“Mankind will not have peace until it turns with trust to My mercy”* (Diary, §300).

*“Let the greatest sinners place their trust in My mercy. They have the right before others to trust in the abyss of My mercy”* (Diary, §1146).

#### ◆ **Conclusion: Mercy is Our Witness**

Today’s readings do not just show us a powerful Church—they show us a **merciful Church**. If we, as disciples, fail to show mercy—to the broken, the fallen, even to those who have hurt us—then we contradict the very heart of the Gospel.

Mercy does not mean ignoring justice. It means offering a path beyond it—toward **conversion, healing, and resurrection**.

As Pope St. John Paul II wrote when he instituted this feast:

*“Divine Mercy! This is the Easter gift that the Church receives from the risen Christ and offers to humanity.”*

Let us receive it. And more importantly—let us extend it.