

# Connecting With the Sunday Readings

**Divine Mercy Sunday**

**Gospel Word**

John 20:19-31

Happy Easter again. Easter is so important that the Church stretches out its celebration for weeks! It's a reminder to be joyful. Do you know what often dries up our joy? Fear! Along with its cousin, worry, Jesus warned us about them countless times. Fear not. Don't be afraid. Yet to be honest, fear and worry seem to always be around. After all, the world can be a dangerous place. But ... is fear good for us? Jesus witnessed fear in his followers because his ministry was judged a threat to those in power. So he invited them to be more carefree, like the lilies of the field. Don't worry. God will care for you, he said. After he died, Jesus' disciples slipped back into fear. So he returned to remind them about God's abiding concern and care for them. Don't fear. Be at peace. Today, we all need to hear those words.

*-by David Thomas, PhD, Co-Director, The Bethany Family Institute*

## Living the Word

It happened in the middle of the night. The house was quiet, and I lay awake with worried thoughts flying through my mind. Our bank account was nearing the bottom. What will happen to us if there's nothing there? My mom was suffering through her last days in a nursing home. I worried about her too. One of our children wasn't doing well at school. The teacher recommended professional help. What could be wrong? The terrors of the night were in full force. I was in misery.

There always seems to be enough going on in our lives to generate a whole barrel of fears and worries. No area of life is exempt. We are weighed down by thoughts of not enough money, uncertain health, troubled children, the difficulties of marriage, shaky jobs, ailing cars ... the list of potential worry-makers is almost endless. And beneath every worry is a fear.

Some fear is well founded. But too many fears obstruct life's goodness. It may also indicate that we are depending only on ourselves. We've lost trust in God. We forgot who's really in charge.

Jesus rose from the dead to give us courage to live more fearlessly. He knew the destructive power of fear and how it robs us of the happiness and joy God wants for us.

We're in Eastertime in the Church's year. It is a great time to stand back to assess our strengths in dealing with life's inevitable challenges. One of God's greatest gifts is mentioned in today's Gospel reading: "Peace be with you."

## Prayer

God of might and power, help us to trust that you will care for us no matter what. Amen.