

Homily

At the core of this Sunday, which concludes the Easter Octave and which was entitled by St. John II to the divine mercy there are the plagues of Jesus resurrected. He had already shown them the first time he met the Apostles, the very same night of the day after Saturday, the day of the Resurrection. That night, as we have just heard, Thomas was not among them. When the other ones told him they had seen the Lord, he answered: "Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands" "and can put my finger into the holes they made, I refuse to believe". Eight days later, Jesus came in again and stood among them. Thomas was with them. He told him to put his fingers into his holes. Then, that earnest man, who was used to personally verify, kneeled in front of Jesus and said: "My Lord and my God!" Jesus holes are a candle for the faithful, but also an evidence of the faith. That is why, in the Body of Jesus risen, the holes do not disappear. They remain. Those holes are the permanent evidence of the love of God for us. They are fundamental to believe in God. Not to believe that God exists, but to believe that God is love, mercy, faithfulness. Saint Peter, quotes Isaiah when he writes to the Christians: "You are healed thanks to his wounds". Saint John XXIII and Saint John Paul II had the courage to look at the wounds of Jesus, to put their finger in his hands and side. They were not ashamed of the Body of Christ. They were not scandalized by him, by his cross. They were not ashamed of the body of their brother because in every single suffering person they could see Jesus. They were two brave men, full of the *parresia* of the Holy Ghost. They witnessed the goodness of God and his mercy to the Church and the whole world. They were priests, bishops, and popes of the XX century. They experienced its tragedies, but they were not overcome by them. In them, God was stronger as well as their faith in Jesus Christ the Redeemer of mankind and Lord of history. In them God's mercy was stronger. It is evident in five wounds. In them the maternal presence of Mary was stronger. These two men contemplating the wounds of Christ and witnesses of his mercy were home of a lively hope and of an extraordinary and glorious joy. The risen God gives his disciples hope and joy. Nobody can deprive them of these two presents, hope and paschal joy, which passed through the crucible of spoliation, of depletion, of vicinity to sinners, until the end, the aversion for that bitter Cup. These are the hope and joy these two saint popes were given as a present from the risen Lord and that they abundantly gave as a present to the people of God, who are eternally thankful to them. This hope and this joy were present in the first community of believers in Jerusalem. The Acts of the Apostles talk of this as we heard during the second reading. This community lives according to the essence of the Gospel, meaning love, mercy, simplicity and brotherhood. This is the image of the Church that inspired the Second Vatican Council. John XXIII and John Paul II collaborated with the Holy Ghost to update and bring the Church back to its original physiognomy, which the saints have given the church along the centuries. Don't forget that the saints themselves carry on the church and make it grow.. By gathering the Council saint John XXIII demonstrated he was delicately docile to the Holy Ghost. He let it drive him. For the church he was a shepherd, a guided guide. Guided by the Holy Ghost. This was his great service to the church. This is why I like think of him as the Pope of service to the Holy Ghost. In his service to the people of God saint John Paul II was the Pope of family. He once said he wanted to be recalled as such, as the Pope of family. I like underlining this because we are experiencing a synodic path on the subjects of family with families. For sure he assists and supports this path from heaven. May these two new saint shepherds of the people of God intercede for the church, so that during these two years of synodic path she is docile to the Holy Ghost in her pastoral service to families. May them teach us not to scandalize of the wounds of Christ, to understand the mystery of the divine mercy, that always hopes, always forgives, always loves.