

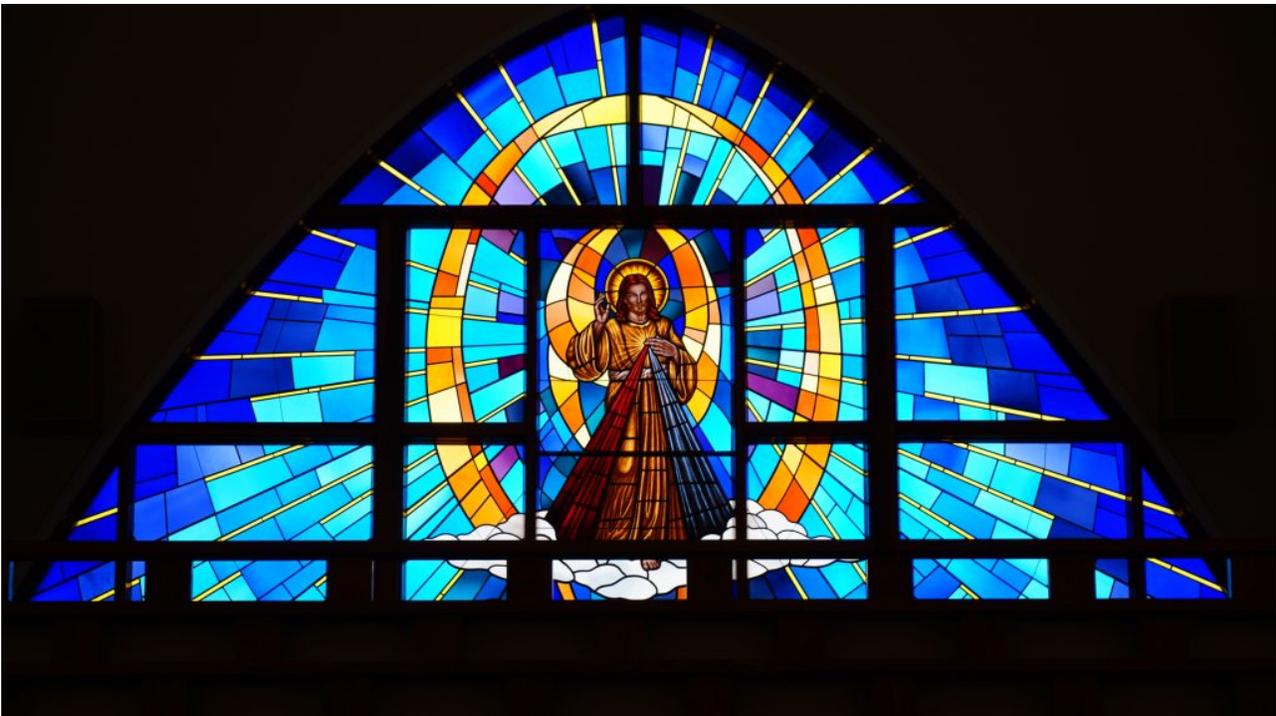
Archbishop Smith: Touching our Wounds with Mercy

I love the union of the Feast of Divine Mercy with the Sunday in the Octave of Easter. The two were brought together by St. John Paul II. Having these two celebrated on the same day provides a wonderful way for us to appreciate the hope that is ours in the Resurrection of our Lord from the dead.

The point of unity is found in the wounds in the Body of Jesus Christ.

We are familiar with the Gospel narrative of this last Sunday. It recounts for us the meeting between the Risen Lord and St. Thomas. Having missed the first encounter between Jesus and the apostles following the Resurrection and having heard about this subsequently, Thomas is insistent that he will only believe that Jesus is risen if he can touch his wounds. In other words, he will need to know that the one said to have risen is the same Jesus who was crucified. The wounds will be the proof. When Jesus does appear to him and enables Thomas to touch his wounds, the apostle who had doubted now can voice the full expression of faith: "My Lord and my God!"

The famous image of the Risen Christ associated with the devotion to Divine Mercy depicts rays of red and white radiating from the heart of the Lord. Since these represent the blood and water that flowed from the side of the Lord, the image points to the heart of Christ, pierced on the Cross, as the Fountain of Mercy.



**Stained glass at the Shrine of the Divine Mercy in Winnipeg,
Manitoba.Lincoln Ho, Grandin Media**

Jesus had said to Thomas, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." (John 20:29) Yes, Christians are those who have come to faith not because they have seen and touched the wounds in the body of the Risen Lord but on the basis of the apostolic testimony and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Yet, the image of Divine Mercy teaches us that proof of the Resurrection continues to be given to us when Christ's wounds are touched. In our experience, the wounds in the Body of Christ are those borne by the members of His Church, and the one who touches them is Jesus by the gift of his mercy. When we experience the mercy of Christ touch our wounds, our conviction that Jesus is risen from the dead and remains with us is strengthened.

The wounds we bear are many – loss, betrayal, illness, despair and so on. Whatever they may be, let us bring them before the Lord in our prayer and through the sacramental celebrations of the Church. We cannot touch his wounds as Thomas did, but we can ask him to touch ours with his mercy. May his merciful touch lead us to join Thomas anew in acknowledging Jesus the Christ as our Lord and our God.



**A life-size statue of Jesus at Basilique Notre-Dame de la Garde in
Marseille, France allows pilgrims to touch the 5 wounds of Jesus while
praying.Lincoln Ho, Grandin Media**