

What moment or moments come to mind when **you** recall being filled with love...? Think about it for a second... Who was there? What were you feeling? Perhaps your heart was brimming, or you felt radiant... How about a time when you experienced a tremendous sense of peace? There was nothing to worry about was there? Nowhere you'd rather be. What about a time when you were "*filled with a joy so glorious that it cannot be described*"...? Or, pertinently for Divine Mercy Sunday, the experience of **being forgiven**. How do we put words on powerful, positive elements of our humanity that might feel indescribable? In my experience, being filled with love often results in a **welling up** accompanied by welcomed tears. A tremendous sense of peace results in utter stillness and feeling content, while joy and forgiveness often manifests outwardly as a smile from ear to ear, spontaneous laughter or even something that washes over me.

Love, joy, peace and mercy are all tangible human experiences. We may not be able to adequately describe them, but we know they're real. They are **also** gifts that are given by Jesus... On this Easter Sunday, I'd like to share some Good News with you: love, joy, peace and mercy are not just gifts given **by** Jesus; they're also expressions **of** Him – of His very nature and self. "God **is** love." "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you." It's why **joy** is mentioned seven times in today's readings, **love** three times, **peace** three times, and **mercy** or **forgiveness** twice. Jesus' Divine Mercy **is** His Divine love, joy and peace. They are utterly synonymous and are **ways** that we can experience His resurrected presence, deeply, personally, and intimately.

Have a think about the intention of the biblical authors for a moment. In the New Testament, their intent is to share the Good of Jesus' life, death and resurrection – not just something to faithfully believe, but

something to experience. ***I mean, this is the whole kit and caboodle of Christianity, right?*** That the resurrection wasn't just 2000 years ago but ***is and continues to be*** something tangible which people can experience in personal, life-giving ways. As Archbishop Mark always used to say: "If the resurrection isn't always and everywhere, it's never and nowhere" *i.e.* if our faith is ***only*** grounded in what we believe took place 2000 years ago, we can all go home. The biblical writers, inspired by Holy Spirit, used words to describe ***how*** Jesus' resurrection can be experienced – love, joy, peace and forgiveness – but they leave it up to us to recognise ***these gifts*** when they're given – and in them, Jesus' risen presence.

I encourage you to spend time reflecting on moments in your life when you have experienced love, joy, peace and forgiveness. Reflecting on ***those*** moments offers a ***past tense seeing*** that leads to a present tense knowing. "*I can see that God was powerfully present in **that** moment, and so I **know** that Jesus is real and deeply present in my life.*" This is the heart of Easter - not just something that happened two thousand years ago, nor simply something we marked last Sunday – but a living reality that unfolds every time we gather for Eucharist, and every time we recognise Jesus giving Himself to us. May we approach this Easter season as a way of ***seeing***, a way of ***knowing***, and ultimately, a way of ***living*** each day in the presence of the One who is alive. Amen.