Introduction: A Sunday that Speaks to the Heart

There are dates in the liturgical calendar that shine with a special light—not only because of the beauty of their rites but also because they have the power to transform lives. **Sunday “in albis”**, also called the **Sunday of the Octave of Easter**, or more recently, the **Sunday of Divine Mercy**, is one of those days. A day that invites weary hearts to return to the fountain of grace. A day that teaches us that Easter is not merely a memory, but a new life offered to us today.

But what exactly is Sunday “in albis”? Why is it so important? And how can we live it deeply in our world so in need of mercy?

Come with me on a journey through the history, theology, and practical life of this celebration, so that we do not miss the opportunity to dive into the living waters of the Resurrection.

I. What Does “In Albis” Mean?

The expression **“in albis”** comes from Latin and means **“in white garments”**. It refers to the **neophytes**, that is, the newly baptized during the Easter Vigil, who would wear a white tunic for the entire Easter Octave as a sign of their new life in Christ.

For eight days, these new Christians would attend Mass daily, dressed in white, fully participating in the life of the Church. The **Sunday after Easter** was the moment when, in a solemn ceremony, **they would remove the white garments**, signaling their full entrance into the ordinary life of the Christian community, yet without losing the purity and joy of their new birth.

Saint Augustine reminds us in one of his sermons:

> *“Today we lay aside the visible whiteness, but we must not lose the whiteness of the soul.”*

What a powerful message for us! The external symbol ends, but the inner commitment must

remain forever.

II. From “In Albis” to “Divine Mercy Sunday”

In the year 2000, Pope Saint John Paul II, moved by the private revelations received by Saint Faustina Kowalska, officially instituted this day as the **Sunday of Divine Mercy**.

This was not a radical change but rather a **deep recovery of the original meaning** of Sunday “in albis.” If in ancient times we celebrated the purity of the soul newly born in Christ, now we are called to remember that such purity cannot be maintained without the **continuous bath of God’s Mercy**.

Saint John Paul II said:

> *“Mercy is the second name for Love. If the first word of the Gospel is Love, the second is Mercy.”*

The Risen Christ did not come to judge but to **heal**. His open wounds speak to us not only of His suffering but also of the safe refuge He offers to every sinner who approaches Him with trust.

III. Theological Relevance: The Pierced Heart of Christ

The Gospel proclaimed on this day (John 20:19–31) narrates two moments:

- Christ’s first appearance to the disciples, where He breathes on them the Holy Spirit and grants them the power to forgive sins.
- The scene with Saint Thomas, who doubts until he sees and touches the glorious wounds of the Lord.

These texts are not accidental. They teach us two essential truths:

1. **The Risen Christ offers Peace and Reconciliation**. The Easter Peace is not an escape from problems but the gift of **Mercy** that restores everything.
2. **True faith is born from the encounter with the wounded Christ**. Thomas represents so many of us who demand proofs, but Jesus invites us to touch Him not just with our hands but with our hearts:

> *“Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed!” (John 20:29)*

Thus, Sunday “in albis” is an invitation to **live by faith in the merciful love of God**.

IV. How to Live Divine Mercy Sunday Today: Theological and Pastoral Guide

In a world marked by distrust, wounds, and individualism, this Sunday gives us a **concrete spiritual roadmap**:

1. **Sacramental Confession**

Jesus breathed on the Apostles and gave them the power to forgive sins (John 20:22–23). **Going to confession** is not optional to live this day fully: it is about diving into the very fountains of Mercy.

Practical Guide:

- Make a deep examination of conscience.
- Go to confession with humility, without fear, knowing that Christ Himself awaits you there.
- Live confession not only as forgiveness but as the **resurrection of the soul**.

2. **Eucharistic Communion with Great Trust**

Saint Faustina taught that whoever receives Communion on this day, trusting in God’s Mercy, will receive special graces. It is not magic; it is about opening the heart like a child who trusts

the love of their Father.

Practical Guide:

- Attend Mass with a clean soul.
- Make an act of trust in Jesus before receiving Communion: “Jesus, I trust in You.”

3. **Works of Mercy**

Mercy cannot remain a private emotion. It must be **made life**: feeding the hungry, consoling the sorrowful, correcting those who err, forgiving the offender.

Practical Guide:

- Today, think of someone you need to forgive or ask forgiveness from.
- Perform a concrete work of mercy, even if it is small.
- Make your home, your workplace, your community a “sanctuary of mercy.”

4. **Trustful Prayer**

Pray the **Chaplet of Divine Mercy**. It is a powerful weapon against evil and a balm for souls.

Practical Guide:

- At 3:00 p.m. (the Hour of Mercy), pause for a few minutes to recall the Passion of Christ.
- Pray for those most in need of mercy: the most hardened sinners, the dying, the souls in purgatory.

V. Daily Applications: Being Apostles of Mercy

Sunday “in albis” does not end when Mass is over. It is a **starting point**.

Today more than ever, the world needs witnesses of mercy:

- **In the family**: truly forgiving, not holding grudges.
- **In the workplace**: being patient with the defects of others.
- **In society**: building bridges of dialogue instead of walls of division.

Let us remember the Lord’s words:

> *“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36).*

Each small gesture of mercy **proclaims the Resurrection** far more effectively than a thousand speeches.

Conclusion: A New Beginning

Sunday “in albis” reminds us that **we have been born anew in Christ** and that we must wear, every day, the white garment of faith, hope, and love.

Divine Mercy Sunday is not an extra on the calendar: it is the **beating heart of Christian life**.

God never tires of forgiving. We are the ones who grow tired of asking for forgiveness. But today, just as two thousand years ago, the Risen Christ stands among us and says:

> *“Peace be with you” (John 20:19).*

Let us open our hearts, touch His wounds with faith, and allow ourselves to be transformed by the Mercy that makes all things new.

Prayer for Divine Mercy Sunday

Lord Jesus,
who rose victorious from the tomb
and showed mankind Your glorious holy wounds,
today I kneel before You with a humble and trusting heart.

You, who are the visible Face of the Father’s Love,

open for me the unfathomable fountains of Your Mercy.
Wash my soul in the river of Your Blood and Water,
so that I may be reborn into the new Life that flows from Your pierced Heart.

Look, Lord, upon my weakness, my falls, my fears.
Do not turn Your gaze away from my misery,
but behold it with tenderness and transform my poor clay into a vessel of Your Grace.

Today I offer You all that I am:
my wounds, my sins, my dreams, my weariness.
Seal my life with the light of Your Resurrection,
and make me an instrument of Your Mercy in the world.

Teach me to trust when I do not understand.
Teach me to forgive when it hurts.
Teach me to hope when everything seems dark.

May I, like Saint Thomas, dare to touch Your wounds
and proclaim with all my being:
“My Lord and my God!”

Today I abandon myself to You, Merciful Jesus.
Today I allow myself to be loved, healed, and lifted up.
Today I begin anew, sustained by Your infinite Mercy.

Jesus, I trust in You.
Jesus, I hope in You.
Jesus, I surrender myself to You. Amen.