

Foundation Day

May 1, 2011

Eucharistic Celebration

First Reading (Acts 2:42-47)

Second Reading (1Peter 1:3-9)

Gospel (John 20:19-31)

Call To Worship

We gather today on this second Sunday of the Easter Season as sisters, associates, and friends to celebrate the Foundation and the 135 years of Life of the Dominican Congregation of Our Lady of the Rosary. During our Eucharistic celebration we will joyfully welcome Jim Russell as he makes his commitment as an Associate member of the Congregation. Jim will take his place alongside all of our Associates who share in a special way the goals and values of the Dominican congregation of Our Lady of the Rosary.

As we enter into this celebration let us open to the memory and the spirit of our founder, Alice Mary Thorpe, who must have profoundly experienced the presence of the Risen Christ and the breath of the Holy Spirit as she led her small band of followers, our foremothers and sisters, to respond with sincere hearts and generous compassion and love to the poor, sick and needy of NYC. We know that these strong and holy women faced many trials and obstacles in the early days. In spite of the harsh realities which faced them they moved forward with faith and hope in God's Presence and Power. They lived each day in the spirit of Christ as God's anointed, bringing glad tidings to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and release to prisoners (Luke 4:18).

In our Gospel today St. John speaks to us of the appearance of the Risen Jesus to his disciples gathered in fear. In a gesture of intimate friendship Jesus reveals his wounded hands and side. He then both gifts and calls his beloved disciples to experience his Peace and receive his Holy Spirit. With the words, “As the Father has sent me, so I shall send you” Jesus then invites his disciples to share in his Divine Mission.

We, as members of a ministerial, apostolic religious congregation, are directly related to these early disciples. We know the invitation to share in the Mission of Jesus. As we will hear, our constitutions speak clearly of our call to consecrated life through which we join with each other as disciples giving witness to hope and faith in the power of the Spirit as we commit our lives to doing the work of the Reign of God in justice and love.

In today’s First and Second Readings, Paul and Peter both speak of the early Christian Community. These disciples were “devoted to teaching, to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread, and to prayer.” From our beginnings in 1876 until now, we recognize ourselves and our life together in this description. Like the early disciples and our founding sisters, we experience the deep presence and hope of the Risen Jesus in our midst. And so let break bread together relying on the Power of God to safeguards us in the midst of our trials, and lead us forward in joy toward the ultimate and imperishable fullness of Life.