

**GOSPEL MEDITATION -
ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE**

April 27, 2025

*Second Sunday
of
Easter*

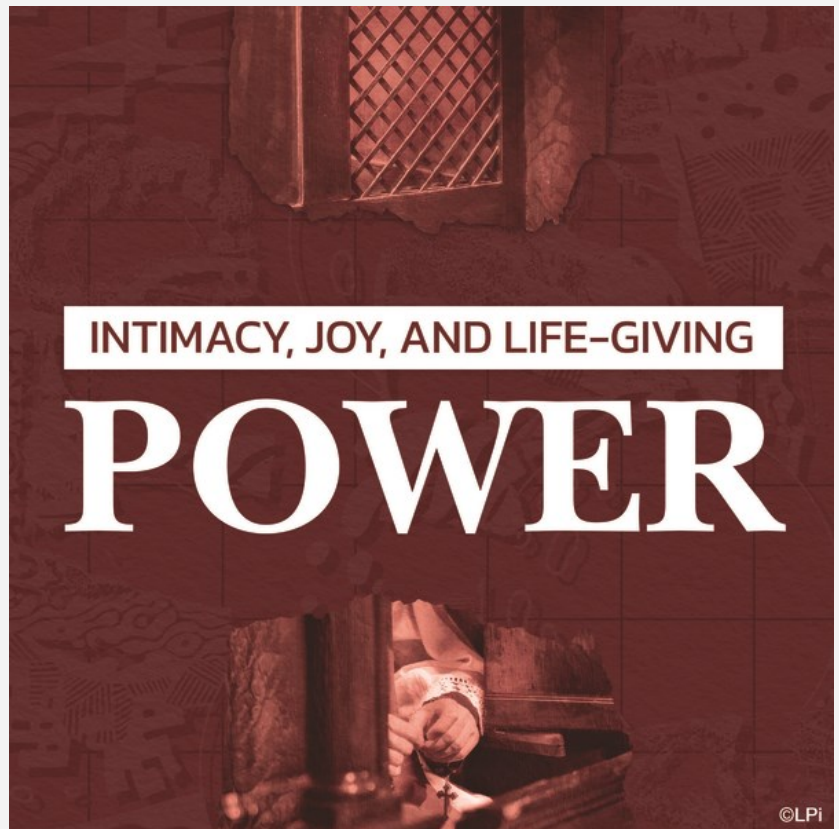
Readings:

Acts 5:12—16

Psalm 118

Revelation 1:9—11a, 12—13, 17—19

John 20:19—31



It's common for Catholics to hear the question, "Why do I have to go to a priest to have my sins forgiven?" I've never liked that question because not only is it clunky (confession is the ordinary way for the pardoning of serious sins, not lesser ones). But it misses the larger context: the wonderful origins of the sacrament itself. And this context is deeply Jewish.

Ancient Jews associated forgiveness of sins with priests offering sacrifices in the Jerusalem temple. It was a solemn, public, and tangible way to access God's mercy. So when the risen Jesus breathes on the Apostles and says, "**Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained**" (John 20:23), the upshot is remarkable: he is the new temple and his Apostles are the new priests. Jerusalem is no longer the place to find forgiveness from sin. Jesus' body, the Church, is.

So why should we go to the Sacrament of Confession? For the same reason ancient Jews went to the temple in Jerusalem: to experience the intimacy, joy, and life-giving power of God's eternal forgiveness.

— *Father John Muir*