

Second Sunday of Easter
April 12, 2026
Year of the Church in History

“There are two ways, one of life and one of death, but a great difference between the two ways.” (The Didache, date unknown)

The Didache, also referred to as The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles or The Teaching of the Apostles, is another early Christian writing. Originally discovered in a monastery in Constantinople in 1883 AD, the exact date of the work has been lost to time. It is generally assumed to have been composed early in the inception of Christianity. This manual of Christian living consists of two parts. The first is a moral treatise founded upon a more ancient treatise entitled The Two Ways. It distinguished between two directions: the path of the righteous (the way of life) and the path of the unrighteous (the way of death). The second part of The Didache provides teachings concerning the rites and orders of the fledging Christian community. These concern items such as Baptism and Eucharist to the treatment of Bishops, Deacons and Prophets. This section concludes with a watchful view toward the Second Coming of Jesus and those persons or things which would announce His eminent arrival. We shall use this weekend and the next to reflect upon these two sections of The Didache because the second half is intended to assist the Christian in their desire to tread the path of righteousness as opposed to the path of unrighteousness.

“The Way of Life, then, is this: First, you shall love God who made you; second, love your neighbor as yourself, and do not do to another what you would not want done to you” (The Didache).

“Do not in any way forsake the commandments of the Lord; but keep what you have received, neither adding thereto nor taking away therefrom. In the church you shall confess your transgressions, and you shall not come near for your prayer with an evil conscience. This is the way of life” (The Didache).

From the very beginning of Christianity, God’s love and mercy toward the sinner has been proclaimed. The Life of Jesus Christ was a testament to this fact. Each year we are called to give honor toward God’s love as we celebrate the Paschal Triduum. Summarizing chapter five, the Way of Death is understood to be all forms of sin which drive a wedge between man and God, other men and himself. As simple as this may seem, it is difficult for us to live. This is attributed to the presence of both our weaknesses and the temptations we face which are from the Enemy. I would like to offer as my conclusion a paragraph from a homily given by Saint Leonard of Port Maurice. Saint Leonard of Port Maurice, 1676-1751, was a Franciscan friar who lived at the monastery of Saint Bonaventure in Rome. He was well known as both a missionary preacher and spiritual writer. One of Saint Leonard’s most famous sermons was entitled, “The Little Number of

Those Who Are Saved.” This sermon, along with his other writings, was submitted to the canonical examination during the process of his canonization. This was done to be certain he had not taught nor presented any teaching in opposition with nor contrary to the Christian faith. In his homily, he would review the varied states of the lives of Christians and concluded - the little number of those who are truly saved, in relation to the totality of mankind. He would write:

“Brothers, because of the love I have for you, I wish I were able to reassure you with the prospect of eternal happiness by saying to each of you: You are certain to go to paradise; the greater number of Christians is saved, so you also will be saved. But how can I give you this sweet assurance if you revolt against God's decrees as though you were your own worst enemies? I observe in God a sincere desire to save you, but I find in you a decided inclination to be damned. So what will I be doing today if I speak clearly? I will be displeasing to you. But if I do not speak, I will be displeasing to God” (Saint Leonard of Port Maurice).