

2nd Sunday of Easter Year A



THE GOSPEL John 20:19-31

As the Father has sent me, so I send you.

Merciful Christ, please
come right through our barricaded doors;
breathe your Holy Spirit upon all of us.

Pick us up when we fall.

Give us your peace
that comes from
your perfect
love of us.

Not to hoard
such treasure;
we want to give it out
to everyone who would believe.

Make us instruments
of the power of your resurrection!

THE FIRST READING Acts 2:42-47

All who believed were together and had all things in common.

Please bring us together, Lord.
Feed your people with
your gift of grace that makes us one in you.

Thank you for your love: it unites us.
Let it be the one nourishment
that gives us strength
to care for each person's
needs.

Let us love each
other well.

*And they
DEVOTED themselves
to the apostles teaching
THE FELLOWSHIP
breaking of bread
and THE PRAYERS and
AWE came upon them all
and THE LORD ADDED
TO THEIR NUMBERS
Day by Day
THOSE who were
being SAVED*
ACTS 2:42-47

THE SECOND READING 1 Peter 1:3-9

*In his great mercy gave us a
newbirth to a living hope*

Christ,
though we haven't seen you,
we love you.

Though our poor minds cannot
grasp you very well, we believe
in your resurrection
we hope in you
always. (Anne Osdieck)



Reflection:

We might ask: why didn't Christ make his first appearance to the apostles at a time when Thomas was there too? Why did Christ first appear when Thomas was absent? Why single Thomas out in this way?

Thomas had trusted Jesus and believed he was the Messiah—and then the Romans killed Jesus and, with Jesus, the hope in Jesus that Thomas had. How much Thomas trusted before the crucifixion can be understood by the way Thomas hardened his heart against trust in the aftermath.

Thomas thought he had made a fool of himself by believing in Jesus, and he was not going to let his heart be broken again. And so when he heard the other apostles express their belief, he scoffed. In scoffing, Thomas protected himself against further heartbreak by turning his back on Jesus and all that Jesus meant to him.

And maybe that is why Jesus left Thomas out of his first appearance to the apostles. When heartbreak is so powerful, it can need space to breathe, to let its pain come out fully. Maybe if Thomas had not been able to move all the way from heartbreak to skepticism, he would not have been able to move back to Jesus so powerfully either.

Without any more evidence than any of the other apostles had, Thomas says to Jesus, "My Lord and my God!" (Eleonore Stump)



Pope Francis' Homily for Divine Mercy Sunday (Gospel of 2nd Sunday of Easter as above)

In his **homily** during the celebration of the **Divine Mercy Sunday** liturgy, Pope Francis points out that the verb "to see" is repeated over and over in the Gospel text (John 20:19-31). Although the disciples see the Lord, the Gospel "does not describe *how* they saw him," the Pope said. By mentioning the detail "he showed them his hands and his side" (v. 20), the Gospel seems "to tell us that *that* is how the disciples," and Thomas, "recognized Jesus: through his wounds."

"Seeing" for ourselves

Thomas wanted to "*see inside*," Pope Francis continued. He wanted to touch "with his hand the Lord's wounds, the signs of his love." This is how Thomas is our twin, because so often we need to *know for ourselves* that God exists rather than taking others' word for it. "No, we too need to 'see God,' to touch him with our hands and to know that he is risen for us," the Pope said.

A Love Story

Pope Francis tells us that it is by seeing Jesus' wounds that the disciples of all time know that we have been forgiven because we "contemplate the boundless love flowing from his heart" –a heart that beats for each person. When Thomas touched the Lord's wounds, Jesus became "My Lord and my God." Pope Francis describes the appropriation of God as *mine* as a "love story." The uncertain, wavering disciple then falls in love with the Lord telling him: "You became man *for me*, you died and rose *for me* and thus you are not only God; you are *my God*, you are *my life*. In you I have found the love that I was looking for, and much more than I could ever have imagined," Pope Francis said.

Savouring this love

The Pope says we can begin to savour this newfound love through the same gift Jesus granted on the evening of his Resurrection: the *forgiveness of sins*. Before forgiveness we may hide behind the doors of shame, resignation and sin.

The last closed door to open is sin. Pope Francis reminds us that Jesus "loves to enter precisely 'through closed doors,' when every entrance seems barred." When we go to confession, we will learn that the very thing we believe separates us from God – sin – instead "becomes the place where we encounter him. There the God who is wounded by love comes to meet our wounds."

