



AMDG
SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER
(DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY)
YEAR C
28TH APRIL 2019



‘As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.’

OPENING PRAYER

God of everlasting mercy, who in the very recurrence of the paschal feast kindle the faith of the people you have made your own, increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed, that all may grasp and rightly understand in what font they have been washed, by whose Spirit they have been reborn, by whose blood they have been redeemed.

We are Easter people, and in the Spirit of Easter, we are sent out to share the joy of the Resurrection throughout the world.

In today’s familiar *Gospel* story, the risen Christ appears to the disciples in the upper room on the day of Resurrection. Jesus breathes his spirit on them, sending them out to spread his message of love, forgiveness and peace. Thomas is not with them on this day, and cannot see beyond his own loss and grief. But eight days later, Jesus returns to the same room and reveals the reality of his Resurrection to Thomas in an intimate way. Thomas is liberated from his fear and doubt, and exclaims ‘My Lord and my God!’

In the *First Reading* from Acts, the Early Church is filled with the same Easter spirit that Jesus breathed upon the disciples. The growing Christian community gathers together in a public place, and people are amazed at the signs and wonders worked by the apostles through the Holy Spirit. Praying together and praising God, the community would have been familiar with today’s *Easter Psalm*, which continues the song of gratitude, joy and celebration which we prayed on Easter Sunday.

In the *Second Reading* from the Book of the Apocalypse, John, possessed by the Holy Spirit, tells of his vision of the Universal Christ: the First and the Last, the Living One who has overcome death for ever.

Let us pray that our hearts may be open to recognising the Risen Christ present amongst us. May his words of peace drive out all our fear and doubt, and may we have the confidence to go out joyfully, transforming the world through the love of Christ.

FIRST READING ACTS 5: 12–16

The faithful all used to meet by common consent in the Portico of Solomon. No one else ever dared to join them, but the people were loud in their praise and the numbers of men and women who came to believe in the Lord increased steadily. So many signs and wonders were worked among the people at the hands of the apostles that the sick were even taken out into the streets and laid on beds and sleeping-mats in the hope that at least the shadow of Peter might fall across some of them as he went past. People even came crowding in from the towns around about Jerusalem, bringing with them their sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and all of them were cured.

I come to my place of prayer and allow my mind to settle from the busy-ness of my daily life.

If it helps me to become still, perhaps I take a couple of gentle, deep breaths, before returning to a natural, soothing breathing rhythm.

With each breath I remember that it is God who brings me life; who breathes life through each moment of my existence.

I prayerfully read the passage.

Using my imagination I picture this Easter scene of the Early Church.

I use all my senses to enter more deeply into the events as they unfold.

What do I see, hear, and feel as the faithful gather together in this public place?

How are others responding to their praise?

What 'signs and wonders' do I picture taking place?

I reflect on my own faith life, and my worshipping community.

What are the signs of the Spirit at work within me and in my faith community?

What draws me to the people I am in fellowship with?

How am I being called to grow the Church in the world?

Before I finish my prayer, I share my thoughts and feelings with Jesus.

I close by slowly praying '*Our Father ...*'

GOSPEL JOHN 20: 19–31

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, ‘Peace be with you,’ and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.’ After saying this he breathed on them and said: ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.’

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, ‘We have seen the Lord’, he answered, ‘Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe’. Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. ‘Peace be with you’, he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand: put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.’ Thomas replied, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him: ‘You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.’

These things are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name.

As I prepare to read this Gospel, I ask for the grace to be aware of the presence of Jesus in my life. I ask Jesus to breathe his spirit of peace upon me.

I read the Gospel slowly. Using my imagination, I enter into the scene, standing with the disciples in the upper room.

What is the mood of the gathering? I wonder what they are afraid of?

What are my own fears?

I imagine Jesus suddenly being present, standing alongside me, looking deeply into my being; knowing, loving and accepting me just as I am.

Even in my doubt, Jesus is sending me to spread his love.

What words of encouragement do I need to hear Jesus speak to me?

What do I want to say to Jesus?

I close my prayer – like Thomas – with my own declaration of belief.

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
for his love has no end.

Psalm Response

'Do not be afraid; it is I, the First and the Last; I am the Living One. I was dead and now I am to live for ever and ever.'

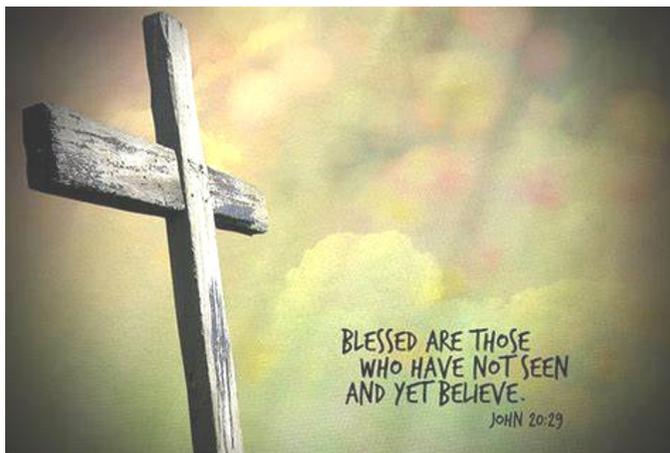
Second Reading

'Peace be with you!'

Gospel

This week's texts if you want to reflect further

Acts 5: 12–16; Ps. 117 (118); Apocalypse 1: 9–13.17–19; John 20: 19–31



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