

Sunday Message

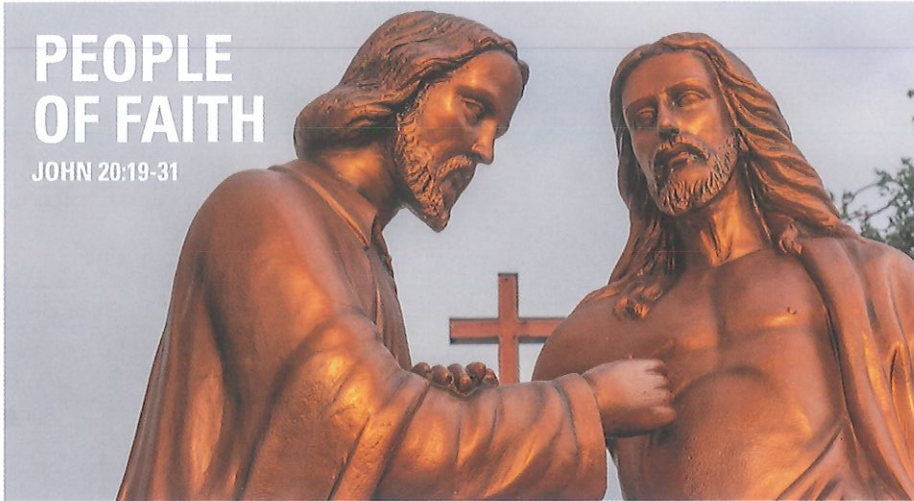
SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE WORD

Year A • 16 April 2023 • Colour: White • Psalter Week 2

PEOPLE OF FAITH

JOHN 20:19-31



Today's Gospel tells the beautiful story of how Thomas the Doubter became Thomas the Believer.

It's the evening of the first Sunday after Jesus' crucifixion, and his disciples have gathered together behind locked doors. They're afraid that those who crucified Jesus will come looking for them, too, so they bolt the door. Suddenly, Jesus appears before them. They are flabbergasted and bewildered, but Jesus shows them his wounds, and they know it is the Lord.

One of the disciples, Thomas, was absent that evening, so when they tell him the extraordinary news that Jesus is alive, he doesn't believe them. He knows that Jesus had been put to death during Holy Week, so how could he be alive?

A week later, the disciples are in the locked room again, and this time Thomas is with them. Once more, Jesus appears. He knows what Thomas has said about him, so he offers him an invitation. "Put your finger here; see my hands. Put your hand into my side. Doubt no more but believe."

Thomas doesn't need to touch Jesus. Seeing Jesus with his own eyes is enough. He falls on his knees and gives the most wonderful profession of faith in all of history: "My Lord and my God!"

In reply, Jesus offers words of comfort and praise for all future believers: "You believe because you can see me; happy are those who have not seen and yet believe." ■

PRAY

Pray especially for people who hide behind closed doors of doubt and uncertainty. Ask the Lord to increase their faith.

DO

In today's Gospel, Jesus gives his followers a task, a commission. He tells them that just as the Father sent him, he is now sending them out to be his witnesses before the whole world. We are his witnesses in our time and place. Speak to someone this week about your faith.

SAY

"My Lord and my God."

LEARN

The gift of faith is meant to be shared. It is not a private thing. Just as the disciples left their locked room to proclaim the Gospel, so are we called to proclaim the Gospel every day, not just by the words we speak but by the example of our lives.



REFLECT

Jesus of Nazareth never ran for office or a position of power, but he had a vision for how people should live and what the world should be like. Remember when he stood up in the synagogue in Nazareth at the beginning of his ministry. He gave what amounted to a mission statement: "I have come to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, give sight to the blind, and announce the year of God's favour." He spoke of a God of mercy and love; even more importantly, Jesus practiced what he preached.

He said that the kingdom of God is one of justice, peace, and love and that his followers will be judged based on how just and compassionate they are.

We see that vision put into practice in today's first reading from the Acts of the Apostles. It is early in the life of the Church, and St Luke paints a pen picture of the new Christian community. They are united as one family. They pray together; they share what they have in common; they look after the weaker members. They support each other. They are one.

Of course, divisions begin to emerge before long, as St Paul's letters demonstrate, but today's first reading offers a glimpse of how things were, how things might be, and how they should be. A glimpse of the kingdom of God in action.

In today's Gospel, the risen Jesus gives his followers a task, a commission. He tells them that just as the Father sent him, he is now sending them out to be his witnesses before the world. They are to live as he lived and do as he did, putting his vision into practice. It's about building the kind of Easter community St Luke describes, about putting into concrete practice the peace Jesus promises in today's Gospel.

If we lived like that, there would be no doubting Thomases, nobody would need to question belief in God or the point of religion because everyone would see the beauty of faith in Christ Jesus and the extraordinary, life-changing difference it makes. ■



NEWSLETTER 9TH APRIL. EASTER SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S RESURRECTION.

A PARISH OF THE MULLINGAR DEANERY

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The Community of St. Camillus 044 9374115.

Adoration
of the
Blessed Sacrament



In St. Joseph's Tuesday 1pm-9pm.
& St. Brigid's Wed. 5pm-10pm:
*Special Diocesan intention of prayer
for vocations and the family.*
Take one Hour with the Lord

ST. JOSEPH'S, RATHWIRE.

Sunday 16th, 11.30am. David O'Brien and Mary Flynn & dec.d members of the O'Brien & Flynn families.
Rita & Laurence O'Rourke.

Sunday 23rd, 11.30am. Kevin Nea MM.

ST. BRIGID'S, RAHARNEY.

Saturday 15th, 6pm. Jack & Philomena Anderson.

Sunday 16th, 10am. Teresa Nea.

Sunday 23rd, 10am. Peter Farrelly.

Weekday Masses; Tuesday & Thursday, Raharney 9am. Wednesday Rathwire 9am. Friday 7.30pm.

MASS OFFERTORY COLLECTION: €755
PARISH DEVELOPMENT FUND €565

RIP: John Whelehan, Mullingar. Late of Killucan.

PTAA: Matt Talbot Novena Mass this Friday in Rathwire at 7.30pm. Refreshments afterwards.

Mass of Healing: in St. Camillus Church on Thurs 27th at 8pm. All welcome.

Overcoming Fear

Jesus had been abandoned by his disciples at the time of his death. One of them had turned him over to the authorities. Another had denied he even knew Jesus. The others ran away, apparently in fear and horror.

That same fear still gripped the disciples as they stayed behind locked doors. The risen Jesus suddenly appears among them, and there is not a word about their betrayal, denial, and abandonment.

"Peace be with you," he says, as though nothing had ever happened. They look at his wounds, and he repeats his remarkable greeting: "Peace be with you."

If only we could follow in the footsteps of Christ and wish peace to everyone! If only we could forgive as he forgave! Where would be the wars? the discrimination? the hatred? the death penalty? They would go the way of death itself, conquered by the resurrection.

Jesus assures us that we have received the Holy Spirit. We have the power to release others of their wrongs against us, just as we have the power to keep them and ourselves bound. Our Easter faith that we have "become a new creation" should strengthen our resolve to forgive as Christ forgave.

We urge our brothers and sisters in Christ to remember the teaching of Jesus, who called us to be reconciled with those who have injured us and to pray for forgiveness for our sins "as we forgive those who have sinned against us."

We call on you to contemplate the crucified Christ, who set us the supreme example of forgiveness and of the triumph of compassionate love.