



LIVING THE GOSPEL

**Second Sunday of Easter
April 12, 2026**

Theme: "My Lord and My God."

Gathering Prayer

Facilitator: 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. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: John 20:19-31

¹⁹ 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', ²⁰ and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, ²¹ and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you.

'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.' ²² After saying this he breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.'

²⁴ Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ When the disciples said, 'We have seen the Lord', he answered, 'Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.' ²⁶ 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. ²⁷ 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.' ²⁸ Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!' ²⁹ Jesus said to him:

'You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.'

³⁰ There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. ³¹ These 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.

Gospel Focus

It's incredibly unfortunate that we mostly know "Doubting Thomas" for the first half of the gospel story rather than for his proclamation of Jesus' identity." Apart from Peter's response to Jesus in Matthew 16:16 ("You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God) one would be hard-pressed to find a more succinct, powerful, and personal witness to Jesus. Of, course, it took some time and experience of Jesus for Thomas to get there. Like the other disciples who gathered in the locked room. Thomas needed a personal encounter with the risen Jesus. However, he wanted his encounter on his own terms- "Unless I see...I will not believe." In his generosity, Jesus meets Thomas in exactly the same way, but also challenges him by saying, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed." This challenge to Thomas is also a fourth wall-breaking encouragement to those hearing the gospel at the time of its writing and to all of us today, who rely primarily on the experience of Jesus written down in the Scriptures. Insofar as we can proclaim Jesus crucified and risen, we are truly blessed.

Gospel Reflection

An ancient way of determining when a person had died was to hold a glass under the person's nostrils to detect any trace of moist air indicating that there was still some breath of life. Before modern methods of cardiopulmonary resuscitation, a person who had stopped breathing was simply allowed to slip away. In today's gospel, the risen Christ reinfuses the breath of life into constricted lungs of the believing community, releasing them from the fear that choked their ability to breathe together and to live fully for his mission.

The frightened disciples are gathered behind locked doors "for fear of the Jews." In the aftermath of Jesus' execution, their fear is understandable-will they be next? In the Fourth Gospel, "the Jews" is code language for anyone who does not believe in and who opposes Jesus, even though Jesus himself and all his first disciples are Jews. Into the midst of this fearful space Jesus enters, inviting his disciples to accept the peace he desires for them. It is not a peace that recognizes the brutality inflicted on him, as he shows them the still visible wounds. It is a peace that recognizes full well the horror of what has occurred and results from the willingness to enter into processes of healing, forgiveness and reconciliation, rather than retaliatory violence. An ability to see the wounds differently, not as something that needed to be avenged but as something that Christ was already able to heal with his peace and his spirit, enables the disciples to let their fear give way to joy.

What results is a rebirth of the community. Just as the Creator brings to life the first human being by breathing into his nostrils (Gen 2:7), so the risen Christ brings back to life the frightened community of his followers.

For some this rebirth takes place on the first day of the week after the resurrection. But not all are present and not all are moving to the same rhythm. The next week there are some who are still locked in their fear and who set up what may appear as impossible conditions before they will come to believe. Thomas voices their doubts: they need to see with their own eyes and touch with their own hands. It is not so much a stubborn resistance to believe what others have experienced that Thomas expresses, as it is the necessity for each one to come to faith through a direct, personal encounter with Christ.

There can be no second hand faith. The testimony of other believers leads one to Jesus, but it does not substitute for the tangible experience of Christ needed by each

one. The gospel also allows that there are different ways that people come to faith: some through seeing, some without. Both are blessed. No matter who comes to believe, it is with a "conspiratorial" faith community—people who "breathe together" through the Spirit, who dissolves fear by the use of peace, forgiveness and reconciliation.

Old and New Testament links

First Reading — Acts 2:42-47

⁴² The whole community remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.

⁴³ The many miracles and signs worked through the apostles made a deep impression on everyone.

⁴⁴ The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; ⁴⁵ they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed.

⁴⁶ They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; ⁴⁷ they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved.

Responsorial Reading — Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

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

Let the sons of Israel say: 'His love has no end.'

Let the sons of Aaron say: 'His love has no end.'

Let those who fear the Lord say: 'His love has no end.' **(R)**

I was thrust down, thrust down and falling, but the Lord was my helper.

The Lord is my strength and my song; he was my saviour.

There are shouts of joy and victory in the tents of the just. **(R)**

The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone.

This is the work of the Lord, a marvel in our eyes.

This day was made by the Lord; we rejoice and are glad. **(R)**

Second Reading — 1 Peter 1:3-9

³ Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy has given us a new birth as his sons, by raising Jesus Christ from the dead, so that we have a sure hope ⁴ and the promise of an inheritance that can never be spoilt or soiled and never fade away, because it is being kept for you in the heavens. ⁵ Through your faith, God's power will guard you until the salvation which has been prepared is revealed at the end of time. ⁶ This is a cause of great joy for you, even though you may for a short time have to bear being plagued by all sorts of trials; ⁷ so that, when Jesus Christ is revealed, your faith will have been tested and proved like gold – only it is more precious than gold, which is corruptible even though it bears testing by fire — and then you will have praise and glory and honour. ⁸ You did not see him, yet you love him; and still without seeing him, you are already filled with a joy so glorious that it cannot be described, because you believe; ⁹ and you are sure of the end to which your faith looks forward, that is, the salvation of your souls.

Catechism of The Catholic Church

105. *God is the author of Sacred Scripture.* "The divinely revealed realities, which are contained and presented in the text of Sacred Scripture, have been written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit."(DV 11)

"For Holy Mother Church, relying on the faith of the apostolic age, accepts as sacred and canonical the books of the Old and the New Testaments, whole and entire, with all their parts, on the grounds that, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author, and have been handed on as such to the Church herself."(DV 11; cf. Jn 20:31; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pt 1:19-21; 3:15-16)

442. Such is not the case for Simon Peter when he confesses Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God", for Jesus responds solemnly: "Flesh and blood has not *revealed* this to you, but *my Father* who is in heaven."(Mt 16:16-17) Similarly Paul will write, regarding his conversion on the road to Damascus, "When he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles..."(Gal 1:15-16) "And in the synagogues immediately [Paul] proclaimed Jesus, saying, 'He is the Son of God.'"(Acts 9:20) From the beginning this acknowledgment of Christ's divine sonship will be the center of the apostolic faith, first professed by Peter as the Church's foundation.(Cf. 1 Th 1:10; Jn 20:31; Mt 16:18)

Sharing and Discussion

1. Where in your journey of faith have you been able to identify with Thomas in today's gospel?
2. How has Christian community played a role in your experience of faith?
3. What does this phrase "that you *may* come to believe" imply to you?

Closing Prayer

Facilitator: Loving God you shower us with you divine mercy. Open our hearts to your voice so that we may be people of mercy to all whom we encounter. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen