

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Like newborn infants, you must long for the pure, spiritual milk,
that in him you may grow to salvation,
alleluia.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

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.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Ac 2:42-47

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.
The whole community remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. The many miracles and signs worked through the apostles made a deep impression on everyone. The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed. 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; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESP. PSALM

Ps 117

Response:

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

or

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

1. 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.)
2. I was thrust, 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.)
3. 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 P 1:3-9

A reading from the first letter of St Peter.

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 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. Through your faith, God's power will guard you until the salvation which had been prepared is revealed at the end of time. 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; 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. You did not see him, yet you love him; and still without seeing him, you are already filled with joy so glorious that it cannot be described, because you believe; and you are sure of the end to which your faith looks forward, that is, the salvation of your souls.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Jesus said: "You believe because you can see me.

Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe."

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Jn 20:19-31

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

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 can put my finger into the holes they made, 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."

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

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
(all bow during the next two lines)
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

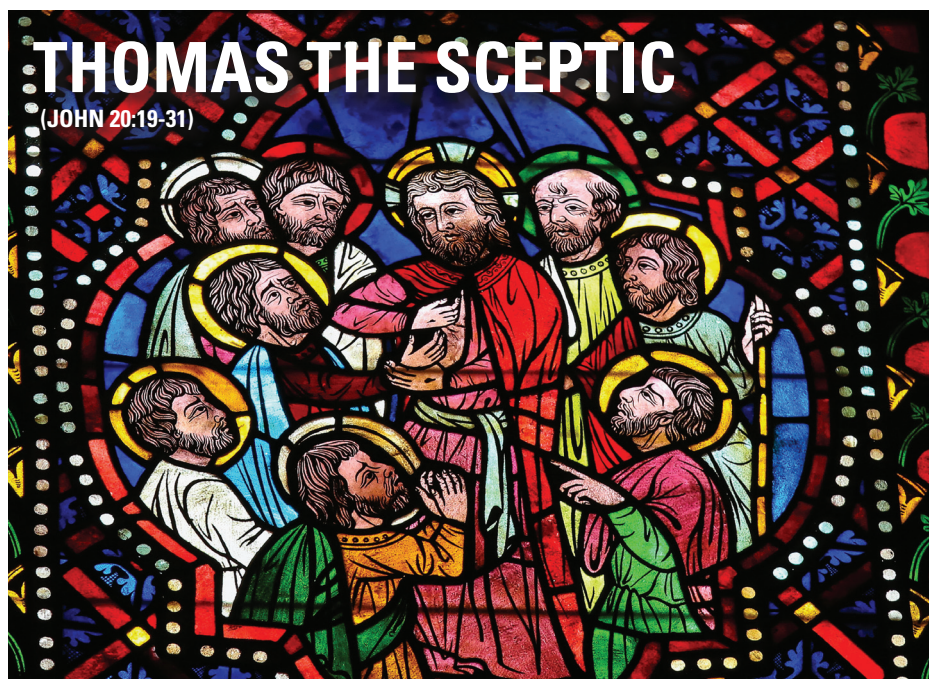
Accept, O Lord, we pray,
the oblations of your people
(and of those you have brought to new birth),
that, renewed by confession of your name and by Baptism,
they may attain unending happiness.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Bring your hand and feel the place of the nails,
and do not be unbelieving but believing,
alleluia.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that our reception of this paschal Sacrament
may have a continuing effect
in our minds and hearts.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.



Stained glass window depicting Jesus and the apostles in the cathedral of Leon, Castille and Leon, Spain. Thomas the Apostle touches Jesus' wound.

Thomas the apostle is an example of the person who never gets things quite right.

He suggests to the others earlier in the gospel that they should accompany Jesus to Judea and die with him: he misunderstands Jesus' describing himself as the way, the truth and the life. In the episode today he treats the other disciples' declaration 'We have seen the Lord' with a high degree of scepticism. But in fact, this is the correct response according to the gospel tradition.

Sometimes we hear that the male apostles were to blame for not believing the report of Mary Magdalene and the other women that the Lord is risen! But in the tradition, it is essential that the primary witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus actually experience the risen Lord for themselves. This is what gives their preaching its authority. This is the basis on which Paul claims to be an apostle, even though he did not know Jesus during his lifetime: he claims that he has had an experience, an appearance of the risen Lord on the road to Damascus, and this makes him as much an apostle as the Twelve. Their preaching then is not based on hearsay. We might note that here, Thomas does not accept the word of the male disciples any more than the Twelve accepted the word of the women in the other accounts. After Paul's experience, there are no further appearances of Jesus: from now others will have to come to believe by accepting the testimony handed down by the word which is preached. And so, the final saying of Jesus is the Johannine Beatitude: Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus is one who acts: the disciples have no share in his ministry. They are not sent out until this encounter with the risen Jesus. This is the point where they become apostles. This is Pentecost in the Fourth Gospel, when Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit on the disciples for their mission. They will now continue his work, the mission he received from the Father. ■

REFLECT

It is perhaps more accurate to describe Thomas as sceptical rather than as doubtful. As a character in the story, he enables the evangelist to address the question of whether those who had these special experiences of the risen Jesus are specially blessed over those who have not. The answer is definitely "No". We might note that although Jesus offers Thomas tangible proof, the apostle does not touch his hands or side, but simply makes the supreme confession of who Jesus really is: "My Lord and my God".

The Johannine Beatitude is addressed to people like ourselves: we have to believe without seeing. One of the ways in which we grow in our faith, our relationship with Jesus is to keep thinking about what we believe and questioning what we are told. In this, Thomas the Sceptic can be our example, and so we may deepen our own accepting of Jesus as our Lord and our God. ■

LEARN

The forgiving of sins mentioned in the Gospel passage properly applies to baptism: the sacrament of Reconciliation is a later development in the life of the Church.

The liturgical greeting by the bishop is "Peace be with you": this comes from today's gospel and emphasises the presence of the risen Christ in the Eucharistic assembly.

For John the evangelist, being a disciple is all about believing: his moral teaching is summed up simply as Love one another.



SAY

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe
(John 20:29).

DO

Hold out your hand with the index finger extended. Consider Jesus telling Thomas to put his finger into the wound in his hand and his hand into the wound in his side. Jesus does not call Thomas blessed for believing in him: but Jesus does call you blessed!