

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

Acts 4:32-35

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.
The whole group of believers was united,
heart and soul; no one claimed for his own
use anything that he had, as everything they
owned was held in common.

The apostles continued to testify to the
resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great
power, and they were all given great respect.

None of their members was ever in want,
as all those who owned land or houses would
sell them, and bring the money from them,
to present it to the apostles; it was then
distributed to any members who might be in
need.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 117

Response:
Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
for his love has no end.
or
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

- 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.)

- The Lord's right hand has triumphed;
his right hand raised me up.
I shall not die, I shall live
and recount his deeds.
I was punished, I was punished by the
Lord,
but not doomed to die. (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 John 5:1-6

A reading from the first letter of St John.

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ
has been begotten by God;
and whoever loves the Father that begot him
loves the child whom he begets.
We can be sure that we love God's children
if we love God himself and do what he has
commanded us;
this is what loving God is -
keeping his commandments;
and his commandments are not difficult,
because anyone who has been begotten by
God
has already overcome the world;
this is the victory over the world -
our faith.

Who can overcome the world?
Only the man who believes that Jesus is the
Son of God;
Jesus Christ who came by water and blood,
not with water only,
but with water and blood;
with the Spirit as another witness -
since the Spirit is the truth.

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

John 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 were 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 three 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.

8 APRIL 2018

Sunday Message

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE WORD

Year B • Season Colour: White • Psalter Week 2



Stained glass window from 1899 depicting the Risen Christ with his disciples

Faith is a journey. The disciple Jesus loved came to believe when he saw the empty cloths in the empty tomb. Now Jesus makes himself present to the wider group of disciples.

Mary Magdalene has brought them the news of the resurrection, in which she now believes because she has herself encountered the risen Lord, so they are aware of it, but they have not experienced for themselves the risen Jesus. They are still fearful and hiding from the authorities. Jesus' showing of the wounds in his body emphasises that the person who was crucified and buried is one and the same with the one now present among them. However, this person is no longer bound by time and space. Jesus confers on them the gift of his peace and then commissions them to continue his mission. It is at this point that the disciples become apostles: up to now, in the Fourth Gospel, they have had no share in Jesus' ministry. Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit on them to support them in their task, as he had already promised.

Thomas, the sceptical disciple, has also to complete his journey. Like the other characters in the story, he does not come to full belief simply on the word or testimony of other people. He demands proof, which Jesus offers. There is no evidence in the Gospel text, however, that Thomas actually touches Jesus; the experience of his presence is enough to bring him from a place of unbelief to faith. Mary Magdalene had also to let go of her desire to hold on to the Jesus she had known. The only one who believes without seeing Jesus is the disciple Jesus loved, the figure who represents the individual persons who commit themselves to Jesus in later times without seeing.

Those who believe in later generations do so on the authority of the Scriptures, including the word of the Gospel that Jesus rose – as do Peter and the other disciple at the empty tomb. And they do this in the physical absence of Jesus. The Gospel tells us that even those who apparently had the advantage of experiencing first-hand the risen Lord still struggled, like us, to believe. ■

REFLECT

The opposite of faith is not doubt but certainty. Doubt or questioning is one of the ways in which our understanding of what we believe actually grows: it makes us think about God and the way in which we appreciate our faith. Very often this does not involve questioning the basics but rather the way in which doctrine is presented and how we have always understood it. What is valid for a child is not usually sufficient for an adult. Thomas the apostle could have accepted the word of the others that Jesus was risen, but then he would not have had the powerful experience which the evangelist describes. He is sceptical of their message and it is this attitude which allows Jesus to lead him into a deeper faith and relationship with him. Perhaps we need to keep faith with our doubts and questions. ■

LEARN

The opposite of faith is not doubt but certainty.

For John the Evangelist, there is a moment when the person decides to believe: but that is only the beginning of their journey in faith.

The forgiving or retaining of sins refers at the time of the writing of the Gospel to baptism: to accept baptism means to have one's sins forgiven. To refuse baptism means that sin is not forgiven.

The characters in the Fourth Gospel represent different kinds of people and their reaction to Jesus and his message.

DO

After Communion today, reflect that Jesus is as close to you now as he was to the disciples when he appeared to them after his Resurrection.

Pray each day this week for the gift of a more lively faith.

If you do not have a copy of the Bible, buy at least a copy of the New Testament this week and read part of it each day.

SAY

My Lord and my God!