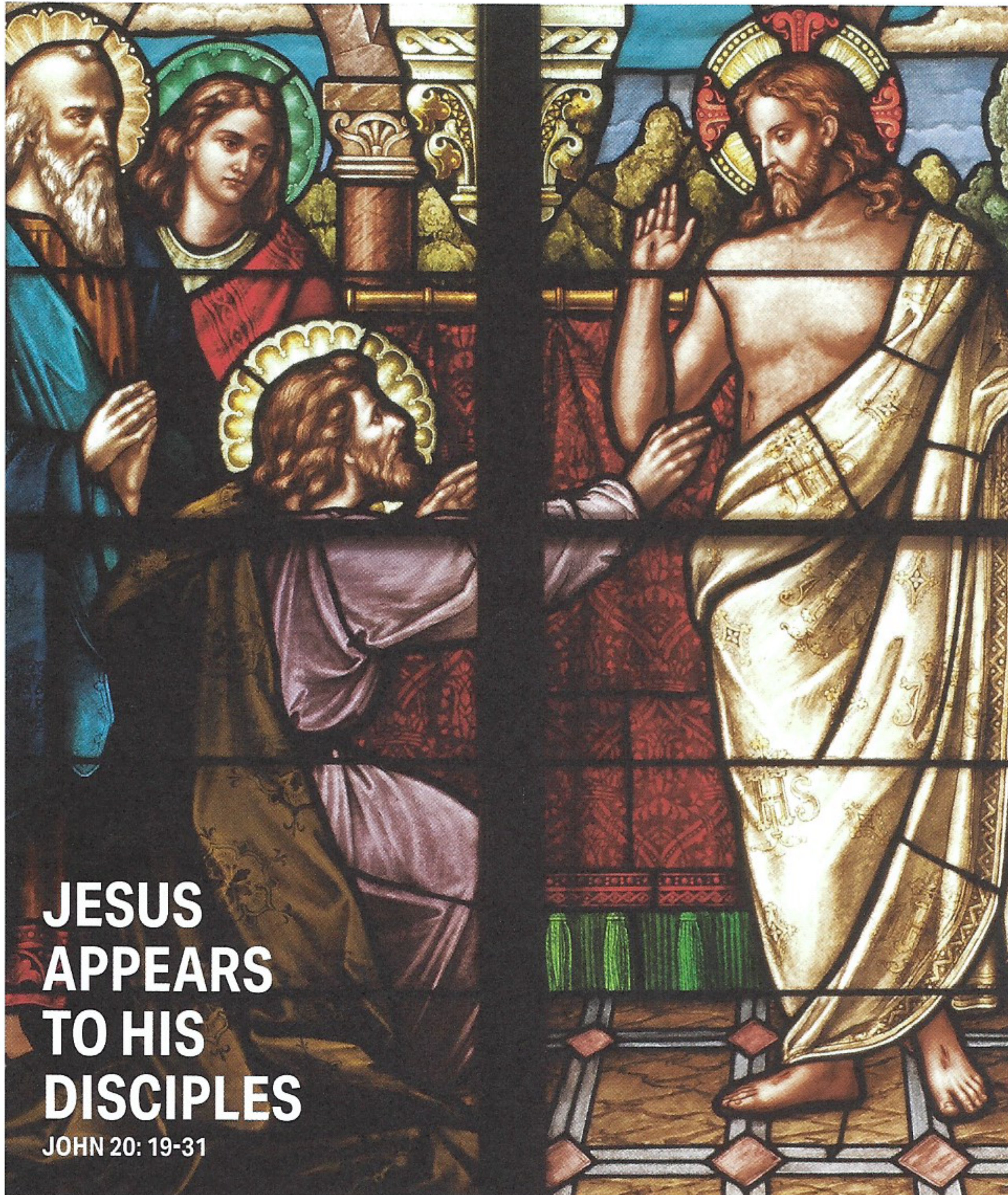


# Sunday Message

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE WORD

Year B • 7 April 2024 • Psalter Week 2



## JESUS APPEARS TO HIS DISCIPLES

JOHN 20: 19-31

**In today's Gospel the disciples are gathered in a locked room. You can imagine how scared they are, and the recent violence has made them security conscious. They have run away from society and are left pondering the question, 'what happens next?'**

The atmosphere is charged with fear and yet, for all their defensiveness, they cannot keep out the love of the risen Christ. Jesus seeks them out and he appears in their midst. The encounter is framed by Christ's offer of peace and love. The response of the disciples is of joy. For the evangelist John, Easter Sunday is Pentecost and the gift of the Spirit is the breath of the risen Christ. The disciples breathe in and the Spirit becomes part of their lives. But Thomas is missing and when he arrives to hear the story, he refuses to believe. Thomas is an interesting character. He is part of the group but he is also very independent. He can think for himself. Scripture scholar Denis McBride states that for Thomas, honesty is more important than loyalty. His doubt cannot be transformed into faith by willing it. The other disciples only come to believe in the risen Jesus when they see him. Thomas comes to believe in the risen Christ in the same way the disciples do. He stands for all those who have not seen the Lord but are asked to believe in him. ■

### SAY

'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.'

### REFLECT

Everybody has some kind of faith. Think about the countless people who pass through airports on an annual basis. They journey through the web of passages that eventually brings them to a cigar shaped aluminium tube, also known as an airplane. With its engines and travelling at incredible speeds 35,000 feet above the earth, passengers don't really understand much of what's happening, but are content to have faith that it will all work!

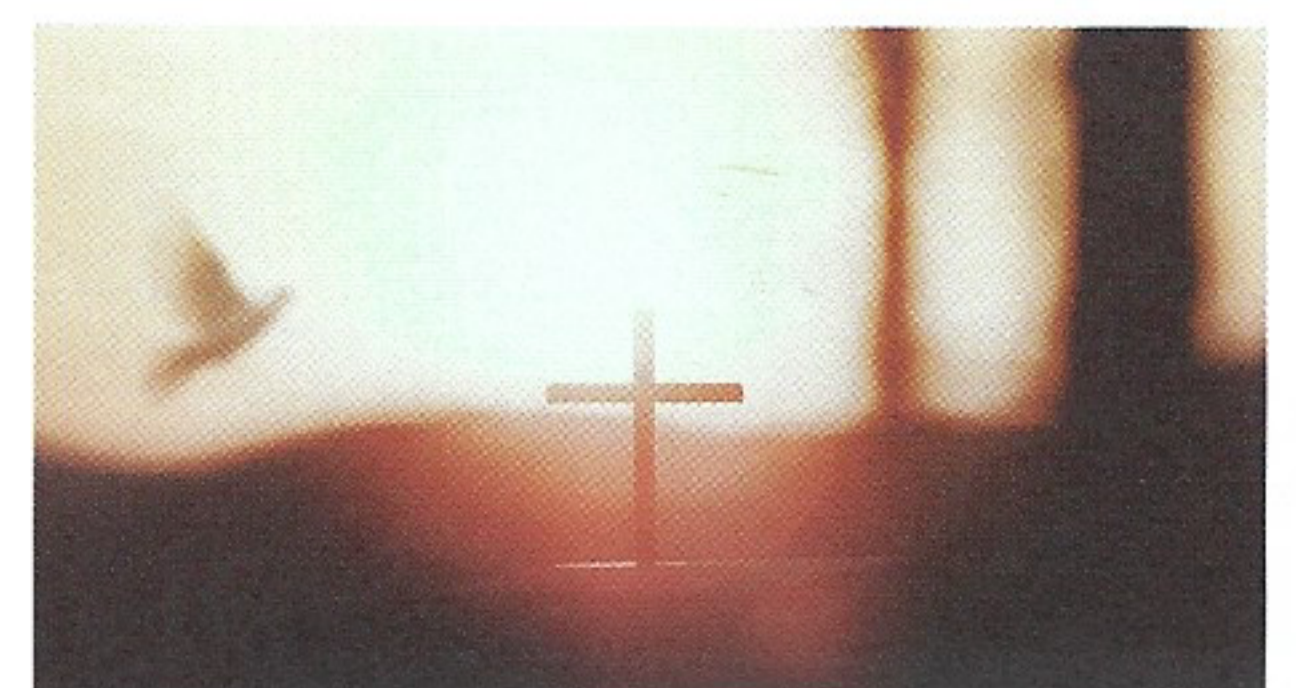
The main character in today's Gospel is the famous Doubting Thomas. The admirable quality he brings to the gathering is his questioning mind. He's not casual about his faith and belief in Jesus. Everybody in the locked room is called to believe in the risen Christ and witness the wounds of Christ and his greeting, 'peace be with you.' For Thomas, the signs and miracles of Jesus during his public ministry are one thing, but it's quite another to encounter Jesus risen from the dead. Like Thomas, we are all free to question and to react to God's works in our own way. Thomas was broken-hearted when Jesus was crucified and buried. He possibly wanted to be alone in his grief, needing time to process the events that unfolded. But there is something admirable about Thomas. Remember, it had been Thomas' wish for himself and the other apostles to go to die with Jesus. In today's encounter, he professes his faith once again with the words, 'My Lord and my God.' ■

### DO

Reflect this week on the encounter between Jesus and the disciples in the locked room. Place yourself into the scene. What is your reaction?

### LEARN

'Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man could stake his life on it a thousand times.'



**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 (118):2-4, 15-18, 22-24

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.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

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.