

**Second Sunday of Easter, Cycle A**  
**(or Sunday of Divine Mercy)**  
Sunday, April 19, 2020



**This Sunday's Readings**

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**First Reading : Acts of the Apostles 2:42-47**

The first community of Christians grows as its members meet to pray and break bread.

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

God's love is everlasting.

**Second Reading : 1 Peter 1:3-9**

We have new hope because of Jesus' Resurrection.

**Gospel Reading : John 20:19-31**

Thomas believes because he sees Jesus.

**Background on the Gospel Reading**

The Gospels tell us that **Jesus appeared to the disciples on several occasions** after they discovered that his tomb was empty. Part of the mystery of Jesus' Resurrection is that he appeared to his disciples not as a spirit but in bodily form. The bodily form was not one that the disciples recognized though. In John's Gospel, Mary of Magdala does not recognize that the figure standing before her is Jesus until he speaks to her. In Luke's Gospel the disciples who meet Jesus on the road to Emmaus do not recognize him until he breaks bread with them. The resurrected Jesus had a physical presence, but the disciples couldn't recognize Jesus unless he allowed them to. **His resurrected body, nonetheless, showed the marks of his crucifixion.**

From readings such as today's Gospel, we also see that in his resurrected body, Jesus seems to be free of physical constraints. He appears to the disciples despite the fact that the doors were locked.

**Jesus greets his disciples with the gift of peace and the gift of the Holy Spirit.** In doing so, Jesus commissions his disciples to continue the work that he has begun: "*As the Father has sent me, so I send you.*" During the meeting, Jesus also shows the integral connection between forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The story of Thomas illustrates our Christian experience today: **We are called to believe without seeing.** In fact, all Christians after the first witnesses have been called to believe without seeing. Thomas's doubt is hardly surprising; the news of Jesus' appearance was incredible to the disciples who had seen him crucified and buried. **Thomas's human nature compelled him to want hard evidence that the Jesus who appeared to the disciples after his death was indeed the same Jesus who had been crucified. Thomas is given the opportunity to act on that desire. He is our witness that Jesus is really risen.**

Our faith is based on the witness of the Church that has preceded us, beginning with Thomas and the first disciples. Through Baptism we receive the same Holy Spirit that Jesus brought to the first disciples. **We are among those who are "blessed" because we believe without having seen.**

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**Family Connection**

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**Gospel Reading** John 20:19-31 Thomas believes because he sees Jesus.

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Many of us can relate to Thomas's response to the news that the disciples had seen Jesus. We want to see for ourselves too, but we grow in faith, trusting the experience and knowledge of others.

Many of us have heard the saying "*Seeing is believing.*"

As your family gathers, take some time to consider what that saying means.

What are some things we believe because we see them?

Is there anything we believe without seeing?

Today's Gospel reminds us that faith sometimes asks us to believe things we cannot see with our eyes.

**Read today's Gospel, John 19:19-31,** with your family.

Think about Thomas's response to the reports about the risen Lord.

*Is Thomas's doubt reasonable?*

*How does Jesus respond to Thomas?*

Jesus grants Thomas the evidence that Thomas needs to believe, but Jesus also affirms the faith of those who will be called upon to believe without first-hand experience.

We are among those whom Jesus calls blessed.

Discuss with your family the basis of each member's faith in Jesus—the witness of the first disciples, the Gospels, the continuing activity of the Holy Spirit, the community of the Church.

Pray together that your faith in Jesus will be strong.

Pray an act of faith together.

**Act of Faith**

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches, because you have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

