

DAY 24: SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Opening Prayer

God of mission

you raised Jesus Christ as the first born of the dead:

by your Holy Spirit, empower us to witness to Him

so that those who have not yet seen

may come to believe in him who was and is and is to come,

and who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God, for ever and ever. Amen

Scripture Readings: Acts 2:14a, 22-32; Psalm 16; 1Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31

Reflection: Today's reading from the Acts of the Apostles gives us a glimpse of the brave new Peter who stood up, filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke boldly of the Risen Christ. This was for the disciples, a frightened group of friends of Jesus hiding away in a locked room, a new reality – a new normal. Gone is the fear, the doubt, the uncertainty and now they are filled with this new Spirit to proclaim to the world that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Christ, the Son of God. The gospel for today records two appearances of the Risen Lord. We see the disciples in hiding for fear of the Jews after receiving the news from Mary Magdalene that she has seen the Lord! Jesus appears among the disciples without having used the door to gain entry. To show that he is the same person who they had seen only days before he shows them the marks of the crucifixion. They recognise him and are overjoyed at seeing him. Twice he wishes them peace and also commissions them to go out and do the work that God the Father had sent him to do. On that first occasion, Thomas was absent but is present when the Lord appears again eight days later and is gently scolded by the Lord for not believing what his companions said to him days earlier. Thomas is also in stark contrast to last week's gospel passage in which John simply saw the empty tomb and immediately believed that Jesus had risen from the dead. Not only can Thomas see the Lord's body he is also told to touch it so that there can be no doubt that Jesus is alive. This also demonstrates that Jesus is not a ghost or spirit creature but is very much a living body. Thomas now declares Jesus to be '*My Lord and my God*' which is what the gospel was leading up to – the divinity (holiness) and Lordship of Jesus. The episode with Thomas is also a reminder to us that we don't need to seek concrete and physical proof for the resurrection or the presence of Jesus Christ but should trust in the Holy Spirit and in the writings of scripture and so place our faith and hope in him.

Concluding Prayer

"Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge.

I said to the Lord, You are my Lord:

Apart from you I have no good thing.

You have made known to me the path of life;

You will fill me with joy in your presence,

With eternal pleasures at your right hand." Amen (Psalm 16:1-2, 11)

May the Lord bless us and watch over us.

May the Lord make his face shine on us and be gracious to us.

May the Lord look kindly on us and give us peace. Amen