

Wednesday April 3rd for the Second Sunday of Easter

OPENING PRAYER: Risen Christ, we gather in your name to celebrate your victory over sin and death. As you breathed your Spirit on those gathered in the Upper Room, breathe your Spirit on us so that we may recognize your presence in our midst and come to know you in the breaking open of your Word. Amen

- In the words of Saint Benedict, “Listen with the ears of your heart.”
- Please note a word, phrase, or verse that seemed to really catch your notice.
- A volunteer slowly read aloud today’s passage Afterwards, we have a few minutes of silent reflection.

READING OF THE ASSIGNED GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

John 20:19-31

19 On the evening of that first day of the week,ⁱ when the doors were locked, where the disciples^{*} were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.^{*} The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.^k

21^{*} [Jesus] said to them again,^l “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

22^{*} And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,^m “Receive the holy Spirit.

23^{*} ⁿ Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”

24 Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 So the other disciples said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”^o

26 Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.”[Ⓛ]

27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.”

28* [Ⓛ] Thomas answered and said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

29* Jesus said to him, “Have you come to believe because you have seen me?[Ⓛ] Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of [his] disciples that are not written in this book.[Ⓢ]

31 But these are written that you may [come to] believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.[Ⓣ]

Notes

* [[20:19–29](#)] The appearances to the disciples, without or with Thomas (cf. [Jn 11:16](#); [14:5](#)), have rough parallels in the other gospels only for [Jn 20:19–23](#); cf. [Lk 24:36–39](#); [Mk 16:14–18](#).

* [[20:19](#)] The disciples: by implication from [Jn 20:24](#) this means ten of the Twelve, presumably in Jerusalem. Peace be with you: although this could be an ordinary greeting, John intends here to echo [Jn 14:27](#). The theme of rejoicing in [Jn 20:20](#) echoes [Jn 16:22](#).

* [[20:20](#)] Hands and...side: [Lk 24:39–40](#) mentions “hands and feet,” based on [Ps 22:17](#).

* [[20:21](#)] By means of this sending, the Eleven were made apostles, that is, “those sent” (cf. [Jn 17:18](#)), though John does not use the noun in reference to them (see note on [Jn 13:16](#)). A solemn mission or “sending” is also the subject of the post-resurrection appearances to the Eleven in [Mt 28:19](#); [Lk 24:47](#); [Mk 16:15](#).

* [[20:22](#)] This action recalls [Gn 2:7](#), where God breathed on the first man and gave him life; just as Adam’s life came from God, so now the disciples’ new spiritual life comes from Jesus. Cf. also the revivification of the dry bones in [Ez 37](#). This is the author’s version of Pentecost. Cf. also the note on [Jn 19:30](#).

* [[20:23](#)] The Council of Trent defined that this power to forgive sins is exercised in the sacrament of penance. See [Mt 16:19](#); [Mt 18:18](#).

* [[20:28](#)] My Lord and my God: this forms a literary inclusion with the first verse of the gospel: “and the Word was God.”

* [[20:29](#)] This verse is a beatitude on future generations; faith, not sight, matters.

* [[20:30–31](#)] These verses are clearly a conclusion to the gospel and express its purpose. While many manuscripts read come to believe, possibly implying a missionary purpose for John’s gospel, a small number of quite early ones read “continue to believe,” suggesting that the audience consists of Christians whose faith is to be deepened by the book; cf. [Jn 19:35](#).

QUESTIONS FOR SHARING

1. “The community of believers were of one heart and one mind.” What facilitates this oneness in families and parishes, and what hurts it?
2. Every saint and good and faithful Christians have been plagued with doubts about their Christian beliefs. Have you ever experienced doubt about your faith? If so, in what way and what helped you deal with your doubts?
3. Jesus brought shalom, peace and mercy to the disciples. How does your relationship with Jesus bring peace to your life?
4. In today’s Gospel, Jesus gives his disciples (his church) the power to forgive sins. Over the years has the sacrament of reconciliation played a role in your spiritual life? If so, how?
5. Name 1 thing today’s Gospel says to us that we disciples of Jesus need to heed/ act on?

Commentary

This week’s Gospel is a story of mission, forgiveness, peace and faith. It is also sometimes called “John’s Pentecost” because in it, Jesus imparts his Holy Spirit to those present. In the first scene, Jesus comes to a group of fear-filled, guilt-ridden and depressed disciples. He stands in their midst and offers them four gifts: peace, joy, the Holy Spirit and the power to forgive sins. Because they have abandoned Jesus in his hour of need, the Apostles most likely feel a great need for “shalom,” i.e., God’s peace and

reconciliation. The joy at seeing Jesus replaces the depression caused by his absence. The gift of the Holy Spirit empowers the Apostles to go forth and preach the Good News, casting aside all fear. The power to forgive sins enables them to impart to others the saving power of Jesus. In time, this text would be looked upon as the Church's basis for the sacrament of Reconciliation. Sins would be "retained" or not forgiven if people were not truly sorry for them or were unwilling to embrace Jesus' teachings. By sharing with the disciples his wounds ("He showed them his hands and side"), Jesus is showing them that it is really he and not some ghost. He is also teaching them that there is no Easter glory without Good Friday pain. Jesus may be imparting to us that community is built when the participants learn to share their wounds. In the second appearance, Thomas, who expressed disbelief in Jesus' Resurrection, is present when Jesus tells him to place his hands in his wounds. He accepts Thomas where he is at and invites him to faith. Thomas makes a wonderful profession of faith in Jesus: "My Lord and my God." Jesus says, "Good, Thomas, you believe because you have seen. A time is coming when people will be called to believe without seeing." The "doubting Thomas" story is also important for all those in future generations who would struggle with faith questions. Thomas represents all those called to believe without seeing. Thomas would be their "patron saint."

IS THERE A CAUSE FOR GRATITUDE THIS WEEK?

IS THERE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU HAVE?

CLOSING PRAYER - The Lord's Prayer

Bible Sharing Room 5 and Zoom

Wednesday, April 3 6:30 – 7:30pm

Weekly on Wednesday

Zoom Meeting

Description: Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Blessed Sacrament's Zoom Meeting

Time: April 3, 2024 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

