

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

YEAR B

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

O God,
you want the whole world
to believe in you
and in Jesus
whom you sent to save us.
Show us how to believe,
and teach us
what we should believe.
Though people
may laugh at us for
believing, give us courage
to stand up for you
and live as we should.
We ask you this
through Jesus Christ,
our Lord.

The Resurrection is the central truth of our faith. Every year the church gives us the story of Thomas on the Sunday after Easter.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

The mission of the church is to establish and nurture community, giving witness to the peace and forgiveness of the Risen Lord. Our first reading tells us that the early Christians shared everything they had so that no one was poor or in need. Their common belief in Jesus united them in heart and mind. Because of this witness, the disciples were respected when they preached about the Risen Lord.

Jesus' first words to his disciples are of peace and forgiveness, "Peace be with you . . . If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven."

Thomas represents those of us who find it hard to believe that Christ is truly among us and that living in peace and forgiveness is possible. To him Jesus says, "Don't be unbelieving, but believe." The evangelist tells us that he has written this for us, so that we will recognize the signs of the Risen Lord and believe.

FIRST READING: Acts 4:32-35

This is a reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

All those who believed in Jesus
were united in heart and mind.
They were a community
and shared everything they had
with one another.

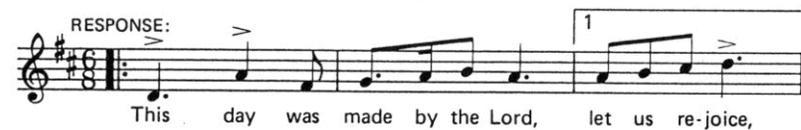
The apostles preached about the Resurrection
of the Lord Jesus with great power,
and God was with them.

No one in the community was poor or in need
because everyone shared.

The people who owned land or houses
sold them
and brought the money to the apostles.
And the apostles
gave everyone what they needed.

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE: Psalm 118



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



GOSPEL: *John 20:19-29*

This is a reading from the Gospel of John.

On Sunday evening (the same day the women had been to the tomb of Jesus), the disciples were gathered in a room upstairs. They had locked the doors because they were afraid of the people who had crucified Jesus.

Then Jesus came and stood in the room and said,
“Peace be with you!”

Then he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord. Jesus said again,

“Peace be with you. As God has sent me to you, now I am sending you to others.”

Then he breathed on the disciples and said to them,

“Receive the Holy Spirit.
If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven.
If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Now, one of the apostles, Thomas, was not there when Jesus came. So, later, the disciples told him,

“We have seen the Lord!”

But Thomas said,

“I’ll never believe it
until I see the marks made by the nails in his hands
and touch the wound in his side.”

One week later,
the disciples were in the same room again. This time, Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus came in and stood among them. He said,

“Peace be with you.”

Then he said to Thomas,

“Here, touch the marks on my hands
and feel the wound in my side.
Doubt no longer, but believe.”

Thomas said to Jesus,

“My Lord and my God!”

Then Jesus said to Thomas,

“You believe because you see me.
How blessed are people who have not seen me
and still believe!”

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS
WITH CHILDREN:

Like the Passion, the theology of the Resurrection is difficult to discuss with children. Let the text speak for itself.

If you choose to reflect on the first reading, ask the children to recall how the Christians lived. Ask them what they think about living that way—sharing everything, no one having more than others. Ask them why they think the Christians lived that way. How did living this way show that they believed in Jesus?

After the Gospel, ask the children what they heard. After they have had a chance to share their reflections, ask:

- Where were the apostles? Why?
- Wasn’t it normal that they should be there?
- What did Jesus say when he came in? Why?
- Which disciple was not there?
- What did he say when the others told him? Wasn’t that a normal way to react?
- What happened one week later?
- What did Jesus say again to the disciples?
- What did he say to Thomas?
- What did Thomas call Jesus?

Help the children understand that when Jesus said, “those who have not seen me,”—he meant, “seen my body.”

Help them understand, also, that it is sometimes difficult to believe in things we haven’t seen. Often we come to believe because someone we trust tells us. For example, we believe certain food is good for us because our parents have told us so.

In the same way, people come to believe in Jesus by what we say and do, by seeing Jesus in our lives.

Note: If time permits and you wish to include an Easter Creed, you may wish to use what follows.

Leader: We believe that Jesus died and that God raised him up.

All Sing: This day was made by the Lord; let us rejoice; let us be glad! This day was made by the Lord; let us rejoice in salvation!

Leader: We believe he is here with us, in other people, in the Eucharist, in our hearts.

All Sing: This day was made by the Lord...