

## POST EASTER SEASON

Sunday April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020

### Second Sunday of Easter - Divine Mercy Sunday

Acts 2:42-47/Psalms 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24/1 Peter 1:3-9/John 20:19-31

Alleluia, alleluia! You believe in me, Thomas, because you have seen me; happy those who have not seen me, but still believe! Alleluia!



"A week later, the disciples were once more in the room, and this time Thomas was with them. Despite the locked doors, Jesus came." —John 20:26

The Sunday after Easter always presents the event that took place in the Upper Room one week after Jesus rose from the dead. Pope John Paul II also designated this Sunday as Divine Mercy Sunday. The Emperor Caesar Augustus gave a citizen a magnificent jewel. The man said, "This is too much for me to accept." Caesar said, "Perhaps, but it is not too much for me to give."

Last Sunday, the Lord indicated to the apostles that though they had deserted him on Good Friday, he forgave them. Today he would send Thomas an email saying that he forgives him for his disbelief in the Resurrection despite reliable eyewitnesses. Are we not like Thomas? He would not believe unless he saw with own eyes. Jesus' followers continued to meet after Easter in the Upper Room of Last Supper fame. Since it was owned by a friend, the price was right. And good thing too. The apostles were broke. Weekly church envelopes and second collections had not yet been invented.

The disciples were sitting about relaxing and exchanging gossip. Perhaps they had finished celebrating the Eucharist. Their Easter dinner would be bargain Chinese take-out. Suddenly the resurrected Lord bursts into their company. Surely several of them fell off their chairs. One or two others must have clutched their hearts and put a Nitro pill under their tongue. His "Peace be with you!" had much more punch than our limp "G'day mate." A free translation would mean, "May God give you every wonderful good!" When you consider Jesus is divine, the apostles had to feel good all over immediately.

Belief and doubt have the nasty habit of co-existing uncomfortably in our selves. If that be your secret problem, lighten up. Thomas is your main man. When Jesus appeared on Easter Sunday, Thomas was absent. Perhaps he was out looking for a job or applying for jobkeeper unemployment assistance or getting drunk. When his fellow apostles reported they had seen the Risen Lord, he assumed they were smoking funny cigarettes or drinking cheap red wine or both.

Thomas did not say he could not believe but rather that he was not able to believe without physical proof. Sorry, but you were not the first to say, "I believe only what I see." Thomas made one serious mistake. He missed the Eucharist on Easter Sunday. Learn from him and never miss any Sunday Liturgy. Jesus often times sends an email just for you at these occasions. Thomas was the last person on the block to believe in the Resurrection. But run up all the flags, for he was the first to profess absolute belief in the divinity of the Risen Saviour. The cry "My Lord and my God" that came out of his gut still shouts out. It is the most celebrated two second sound bite in history and a wonderful prayer to boot. Thomas began that second Easter Sunday by touching Jesus as a friend. But, when he pulled back his hand from the wet wounds, he realized he was in touch with God Himself. Thomas was blown away by the experience. He would never be the same again.

We owe Thomas big time. His doubt is a further proof to us that the Risen Christ is as physical as we are right now. All of God's closest friends – Moses, David, Abraham, Job, Thomas, etc – had doubts. They voiced them publicly. Expressing doubts is often the next level of intimacy with God

On Easter Sunday the Master forgave the apostles for running out on Him on Good Friday. Today He absolves Thomas for his disbelief. He gave them all a second chance. Forgiveness for your sins through confession may be too much for you to receive, but it is not too much for Christ to give. Have a blessed Sunday and Happy Feast of Divine Mercy!!!

### REFLECTION - FORGIVE AND FIND FREEDOM

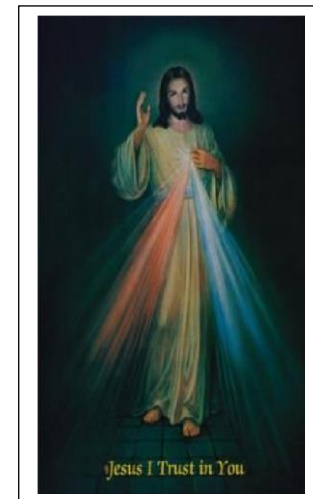
The story is told of a good and prayerful woman who claimed to have had a vision of Christ. She went to see the Bishop. "Did you talk to him?" he asked. "Yes," she replied, "I did." "Well," said the Bishop, "the next time he appears to you ask the Lord this question: 'What was the Bishop's greatest sin before he became a Bishop?'" About three months later she returned. When she came in the Bishop asked her, "Did you see the Lord again?" "Yes," she replied. "Did you ask him the question about my sin?" "Yes, I did." "And what did he say?" She smiled as she answered, "The Lord said, 'I don't remember any more.'"

Like the story of the prodigal son, embraced by his Father, the Bishop's sins were not held against him. Nor are ours. So often it is we ourselves who hold on to the memory of our transgressions and lacerate ourselves, refusing to trust the mercy of the Father. Worse still, we harshly bind others, clutching the hurt they caused us, subtly or overtly reminding them of their offence.

How much pain there is in life from this accusatory, unforgiving attitude. How much pain when we refuse to let go and forgive ourselves, when we stop short of forgiving others. Some hurts alas, go back generations and are nursed and kept alive through the years. It is often seen as a matter of family honour not to forget, not to forgive but to fuel the resentment by retelling the story.

Today, in an era of visual overloads, we are fed a daily diet of violence with stories that invite our harsh condemnation. How seldom we hear the stories of grace and forgiveness! But when we do, and hear of the parents who forgive the motorist who killed their little child, or the people who hold no grudge against those who bombed their community, are we not touched to the heart? They are not saying the injustice done is all right; it is not, they know it is wrong. But by refusing to be caught in a cycle of bitterness, they have to let go and forgive. They are free.

The Dalai L tells of a story of a Tibetan monk who had spent eighteen years in a Chinese prison. When he escaped and eventually met the Dalai Lama he asked him what he felt was his biggest threat or danger while in prison. And the monk, who had suffered so much, gave an astonishing answer. What he feared most, he said was losing his compassion for the Chinese. Forgiveness is at the core of Jesus' message. He cuts through the 'eye for an eye' mentality and tells his (shocked) followers that they must forgive and forgive and forgive. We are his followers today. Let us, with the grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, forgive our enemies, our friends, ourselves.



Columban Sisters

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## GOSPEL REFLECTION

When we celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation, we are assured that our sins are forgiven and that we will have God's help to avoid sin in the future.

What is a sacrament? A sacrament is an outward sign of an inward grace. There are seven such sacraments in the Catholic Church. However, the seven sacraments are not simply signs like other signs in our lives. Unlike other signs and symbols, the sacraments are signs or symbols that bring about in our lives what they signify.

For example, although we might say that a washing machine is a symbol of cleanliness, we know that it is much more than that because it actually does what it symbolises: it cleans. In the same way a sacrament signifies an actual meeting – a personal encounter – with the risen Lord Jesus. Thus the sacrament of reconciliation is not just a sign or symbol of God's forgiveness. Through it, we are truly absolved from our sins. The sacrament does what it signifies.

In celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation, what, we may ask, is the inward grace being celebrated? It is the process of the inner change that is happening because of conversion away from the darkness of sin towards the radiant light of Christ. But this inner change is not outwardly recognisable, precisely because it is interior to the penitent's life. Therefore, there needs to be some outward sign that, in some way, manifests the inner change that is occurring.

For the sacrament to be celebrated properly, the penitent first confesses his / her sins. The naming of the sins in the presence of the priest indicates that the penitent is accepting personal responsibility for them.

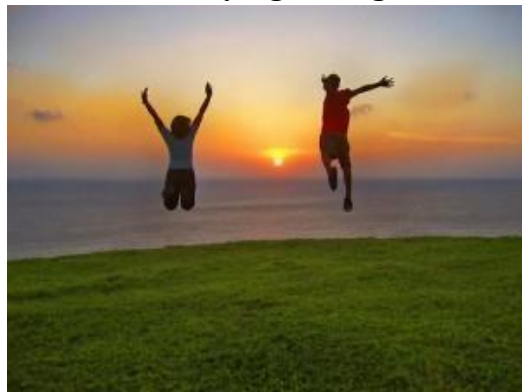
Secondly, the penitent expresses genuine sorrow for the sins by praying the act of contrition. Again, the vocalising of this prayer is a sign of the penitent's sorrow and desire for conversion.

Thirdly, and crucially, the priest speaks the words of absolution that, because of the grace of ordination, mediate God's forgiveness. As the penitent listens to the words of absolution and sees the priest make the sign of the cross, the penitent realises that his / her sins are forgiven.

Fourthly, and finally, the penitent performs the penance given by the priest. The penance is another outward sign of the inward grace. The penance in itself does not undo the harm caused by the sins but is simply a gesture on the penitent's part that the process of interior conversion is progressing. Nonetheless, the penance is an important activity that demonstrates outwardly what is happening inwardly in the penitent's life.

*We all need to experience reconciliation in our lives. The sacrament of reconciliation enables us to experience God's forgiveness for our sins. Through the outward signs of confessing sins, praying the act of contrition, receiving absolution and doing the penance, we demonstrate our interior conversion and we complete the process of sacramental reconciliation.*

John Litterton "Journeying through the Year of Matthew" [www.Columba.ie](http://www.Columba.ie)



*The sheer joy of forgiveness and burdens lifted*

## THANKS, THOMAS!

Thomas ... thanks! For bringing honesty into our faith. He didn't pretend that he was better than he was. He began by wanting proof and ended by being glad of faith. He is the patron saint of transitions and steps in faith. Faith is a journey. He is the saint of faith in our times. The community was the place he found faith, having lost it when he tried to go it alone. Then he came back to the community of faith and went on a journey of life that took him to martyrdom in India.

He also found Christ in wanting to touch his wounds. We find God when we enter into his wounds in the wounds of our world.

In the faith community of the church we can keep our faith. Our faith grows here too. Thomas looked for faith by wanting to touch the wounds of Jesus. When Jesus invited him to do so, he found he didn't need to. He found faith in being present with the wounded Christ and discovered there his faith in the glory of Christ.

We can do the same. What was said to Thomas is said to us all: 'You believe because you can see me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.'

*Fr Donal Neary, S.J*

Gospel Reflections for the Year of Matthew [www.messenger.ie/bookshop/](http://www.messenger.ie/bookshop/)

## WEEKDAY READINGS

Monday of the Second Week of Easter  
Acts 4:23-31/Psalms 2:1-3, 4-7A, 7B-9/John 3:1-8

Tuesday of the Second Week in Easter  
Acts 4:32-37/Psalms:1 AB, 1CD-2, 5/John 3:7B-15

Wednesday of the Second Week in Easter  
Acts 5, 17 – 26;/Jn 3, 16-21

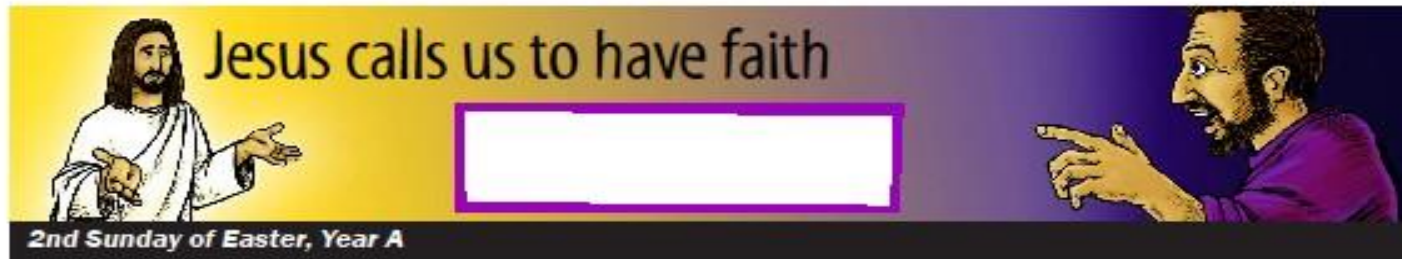
Thursday of the Second Week of Easter  
Lectionary: 270/Acts 5:27-33/Psalms 34:2 and 9, 17-18, 19-20/John 3:31-36

Friday of the Second Week of Easter  
Acts 5:34-42/Psalms 27:1, 4, 13-14/John 6:1-15

Saturday of the Second Week of Easter (Anzac Day)  
I Cor 1, 18-25;/Jn 12, 23-28



**CHILDREN'S CORNER**



**REFLECTION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE – by Lisa-Marie Calderone-Stewart**

Thomas did not quite 'get it' when the other Apostles were telling him that Jesus had risen from the dead. He wanted to see for himself. Is that so strange? Would you believe it if your friends told you that while they were locked up in a room someone who had recently died walked through the door and appeared to them? Would you want to see it yourself?

When it comes to Christianity, do you think you 'get it'? Do you 'see the light'? If so, what is it all about? If not, what don't you get? What questions do you have about Jesus' resurrection?

The continuum of doubt and belief has two extremes. On the 'extreme doubt' side is cynicism. A cynic doubts everything, especially people's good intentions. It can be a negative, unhappy way of seeing things. A person on the opposite side, the 'extreme belief' side, is gullible. That person believes whatever anyone says. It can be a happy, but sometimes dangerous, way of seeing things.

Are you a doubting Thomas? Do you think you are cynical? Do you think you are gullible? Why or why not?

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**THIS SUNDAY IS THE FEAST OF THE DIVINE MERCY.**

3 o'clock prayer - the hour of great mercy

Jesus said: Call upon my mercy on behalf of sinners; I desire their salvation. When you say this prayer, with a contrite heart and with faith on behalf of some sinner, I will give that person the grace of conversion.

**Let us pray:** O Blood and Water which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a Fount of Mercy for us, I trust in you. Jesus, I trust in You

**THE SICK**

As we journey with our Lord through this tough time let us remember in our prayers our family, parishioners and all those who are sick. May the healing power of God touch and give them strength and heal them.

**RECENTLY DECEASED**

We pray for the recently deceased in our parish community. Please remember in your prayers the repose of the soul of Lyn Matthews' mother and Mary Roberson.

**DEATH ANNIVERSARY**

Margarita Adecer, Manong Lapinig, Pedro Lapinig, Ruth Tarn Pike, Elwood Zimmerman, Heather Grimmett, Alona Oppus, Cornella (Malaque) Galleros, Rosario Malague.

*May all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.*

**Gospel** Jn 20:19-29

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 are many things present in our lives that we don't see with our eyes. Circle the words which represent things we do not see.

BIBLE	CRUCIFIX
LOVE	FORGIVENESS
JOY	PEACE
ALTAR	FLOWERS
BREATH	CANDLE
CHALICE	HOPE

**Complete the Text maze:**

"You are my Lord and my God!"

E	D	R	C	A	S	F	O	START
S	A	O	L	F	W	A	U	A
D	N	S	Y	M	E	R	E	R
M	A	O	L					
Y	G	D	O					
K	O	H	T					
C	D	F	P					
	FINISH							

