

24 APRIL 2022

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER
(DIVINE MERCY)

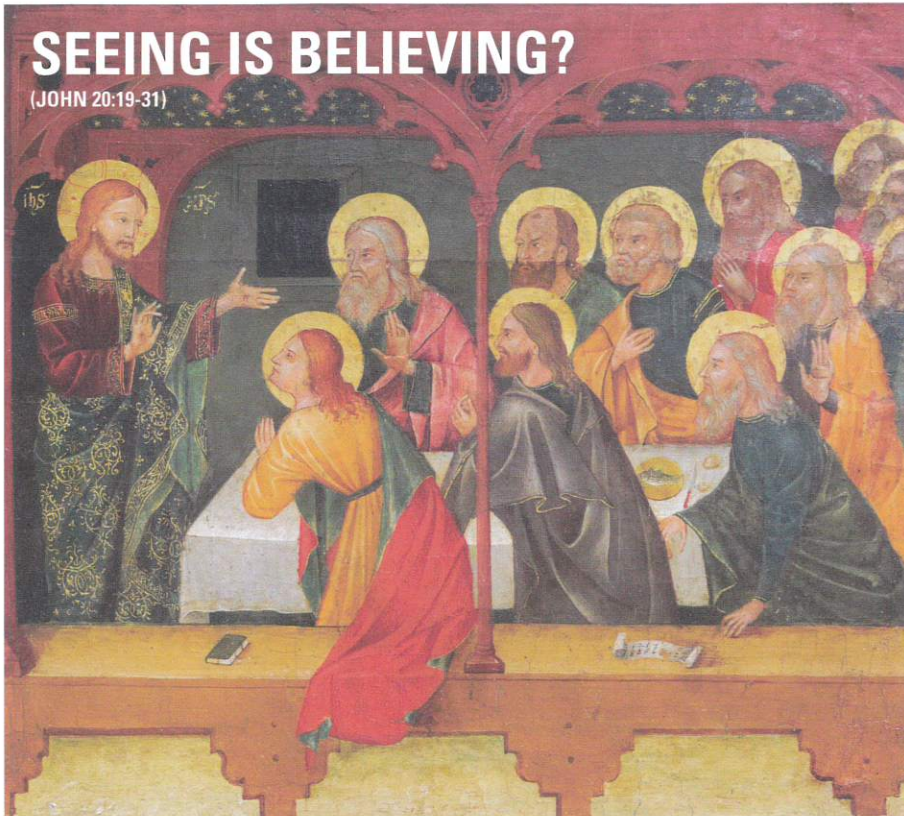
Sunday Message

THE WORD

Year C • Psalter Week 2

SEEING IS BELIEVING?

(JOHN 20:19-31)



Painting in Castello Visconteo, Pavia, Italy, depicting the risen Jesus with his apostles

Despite the message from Mary Magdalene, the disciples are in hiding out of fear for their lives. It will take an experience of the risen Jesus among them to convince them that he is truly risen.

During Jesus' ministry, the disciples have no active part to play: they are given no share in Jesus' ministry, unlike in the other Gospel versions. It is now that Jesus commissions them and they become "apostles", that is, ones who are sent. Now that Jesus is no longer among them as before, it is up to them to continue his mission. Jesus breathes on them the Holy Spirit to empower them in their ministry: those who accept their message will express this publicly by being baptised and having their sins forgiven as a consequence of their decision to live this new life. Those who decide not to become disciples will remain in their present spiritual condition.

Thomas represents the sceptical person who wants to see for himself that what the others tell him is true. The risen Jesus appears among the disciples again and wishes them "Peace". Thomas does not actually touch Jesus physically, but makes the supreme confession of faith in Jesus which we find in the Gospel of John, when he declares "My Lord and my God!" This leads to the last recorded words of Jesus, "Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe." These words are addressed to us who hear them today. ■

SAY

Jesus, you are my Lord and my God!

(see John 20:28)

DO

Renew your baptismal promises and reflect on how you can best live them out.

REFLECT

Many of us will have a sneaking sympathy for Thomas, who is reluctant to take his fellow disciples' glad tidings as true, simply on their word alone. But his wish is granted, and the risen Jesus does not rebuke him for wanting to know more, to find out for himself. The characters in the Gospel narrative may well be historical, but they are also representative; we are invited to consider them in their human reality and to identify with those who are nearest to ourselves. Some of us may feel close to Thomas and his desire for certainty. Jesus tells him to not be *unbelieving* but *believing*.

We note that it is Thomas' enquiring mind which leads him to this personal encounter with Jesus. We might keep this in mind as we welcome our new members into the community this Easter after their searching for faith, and remember that our own understanding often develops best through questions about what the doctrines of the Church really mean. Explanations given to children are seldom sufficient for adults.

The noun "faith" is not found in the Fourth Gospel, but the verb "to believe" occurs over 100 times: it is a key term in John's thought. Thus, belief in Jesus is not something which we *possess*, but something which we *do*. It is an act of believing and trusting in the person of Jesus, essentially a relationship of love, the true mark of the disciple. ■

LEARN

The forgiveness of sins mentioned in today's Gospel refers to the result of the person being baptised.

Sacramental confession belongs to a later period in church history and development.

The climax of the Fourth Gospel is the Johannine Beatitude, "Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe."

For John the Evangelist, faith means actively putting our belief and trust in the person of Jesus.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Receive the joy of your glory, giving thanks to God,
who has called you into the heavenly kingdom, alleluia.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

God of everlasting mercy,
who in the very recurrence of the paschal feast
kindle the faith of the people you have made
your own,
increase, we pray, the grace you have
bestowed,
that all may grasp and rightly understand
in what font they have been washed,
by whose Spirit they have been reborn,
by whose Blood they have been redeemed.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Acts 5:12-16

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.
The faithful all used to meet by common consent in the Portico of Solomon. No one else ever dared to join them, but the people were loud in their praise and the numbers of men and women who came to believe in the Lord increased steadily. So many signs and wonders were worked among the people at the hands of the apostles that the sick were even taken out into the streets and laid on beds and sleeping-mats in the hope that at least the shadow of Peter might fall across some of them as he went past. People even came crowding in from the towns round about Jerusalem, bringing with them their sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and all of them were cured.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 117

Response:
Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
for his love has no end.
or
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

- Let the sons of Israel say:
"His love has no end."
Let the sons of Aaron say:
"His love has no end."
Let those who fear the Lord say:
"His love has no end." (R.)
- The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone.
This is the work of the Lord,
a marvel in our eyes.
This day was made by the Lord;
we rejoice and are glad. (R.)
- O Lord, grant us salvation;
O Lord grant success.
Blessed in the name of the Lord is he who comes.
We bless you from the house of the Lord;
the Lord God is our light. (R.)

SECOND READINGApocalypse
1:9-13, 17-19

A reading from the book of the Apocalypse.
My name is John, and through our union in Jesus I am your brother and share your sufferings, your kingdom, and all you endure. I was on the island of Patmos for having preached God's word and witnessed for Jesus; it was the Lord's day and the Spirit possessed me, and I heard a voice behind me, shouting like a trumpet, "Write down all that you see in a book." I turned round to see who had spoken to me, and when I turned I saw seven golden lamp-stands and, surrounded by them, a figure like a Son of man, dressed in a long robe tied at the waist with a golden girdle.
When I saw him, I fell in a dead faint at his feet, but he touched me with his right hand and said, "Do not be afraid; it is I, the First and the Last; I am the Living One. I was dead and now I am to live for ever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and of the underworld. Now write down all that you see of present happenings and things that are still to come."
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Jesus said: "You believe because you can see me.
Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe."
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 20:19-31

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.
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 were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
(all bow during the next two lines)
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, we pray,
the oblations of your people
(and of those you have brought to new birth),
that, renewed by confession of your name and
by Baptism,
they may attain unending happiness.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Bring your hand and feel the place of the nails,
and do not be unbelieving but believing,
alleluia.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that our reception of this paschal Sacrament
may have a continuing effect
in our minds and hearts.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.