

Second Sunday of Easter - Yr. C

[Reading I: Acts 5:12-16](#)

[Responsorial Psalm: 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24](#)

[Reading II: Revelation 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19](#)

[Gospel: John 20:19-31](#)

Readings may be found on the US Bishop's website:

[Second Sunday of Easter | USCCB](#)



Jesus shows his wounded hands

During the Easter season, the readings are all drawn from the New Testament. The first reading is taken from the Acts of the Apostles, in Year C of the lectionary, the second reading is drawn from the Book of Revelation, and the Gospel passage is taken from John.

The passage from Acts highlights how Christ was active in the ministry of the early church. The ministry of Jesus continued in the early Christian community. Just as Jesus taught and healed, so too large numbers of people gathered to hear the Apostles, and many were healed.

The phrase, "were added to" reflects the experience of the early community. God worked in the hearts of people and brought them into the community of Christians. While we have a role to play in responding to God, it is God who brings about change. The second aspect is that the new believers did not form their own groups but joined the Jerusalem community. There was one body of people praying, worshipping, learning, and serving.

The Book of Revelation is a book of visions that draws strongly from images and events in the Hebrew scriptures. One must approach each description and number by looking at it from several vantage points. All these visions lead to one revelation. The passage this Sunday presents a vision of the one who commands the author to write down what he sees.

The vision is of the Risen Christ who once was dead but lives forever. He is the one who holds the "keys to death and the netherworld." The world order has changed because Christ has conquered death and every evil. The reign of God has begun, and the original plan of God is being restored. The regal clothing manifests the overturning of evil. Christ who was stripped of his garments, now is present in clothing of authority. He will show what the reign of God will bring.

The Gospel recounts Jesus' appearance to the disciples on Easter night, convey the Holy Spirit to them, and authorizing them to forgive sins. (This Sunday is also referred to as Divine Mercy Sunday because of the commission to forgive sins.) The Gospel also presents Jesus appearing a second time to the apostles a week later, and this time Thomas is present. (This Sunday also has been called Doubting Thomas Sunday.)

The forgiveness of sins is also another unique aspect of Christianity. Other traditions have prescribed activities or rituals that will earn forgiveness for a person. Christianity sees forgiveness as a gift. It is God's gift to us that cannot be achieved. It is a gift, and all we need to do is accept it. Through Christ's words to the apostles, the Church is empowered to offer this gift to everyone who desires it. God's great mercy is unlimited.

In the same way, disciples of Jesus should show the same forgiveness that has been shown to them. Jesus calls disciples to do this in the Sermon on the Mount and in the Lord's prayer. "Forgive us as we forgive those who have trespassed against us.

Thomas's desire to see Christ and place his fingers in the nail marks raises the issue that people have asked in every age. Unless I can see, I will not believe. But even seeing does

not always produce faith. The Jewish leaders who rejected the miracle of the man born blind saw someone who was blind and could now see, but that did not bring them to faith. Thomas comes to faith when Jesus addresses him. The Word of God came into his mind and heart, and he believed.

We, too, are called to believe without seeing. We have the disciples' witness and need to look to our experience in the community of the faithful. Is the Lord in our midst? If so, our words and deeds should give witness to him so that others may come to believe.

The purpose of the Gospels is presented in the concluding lines: "These are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name." The scriptures are offered that we may come to faith and have life.

Reflection Questions:

How have you experienced forgiveness in your life? (Recall some experiences and then think about how God always wants to forgive you.)

What are the challenges that you face in forgiving others?

The risen Lord became real to Mary Magdalene and Thomas when He spoke to them. How have you heard the Lord in your life? In which scriptures did the voice of Christ speak to you or touch your spirit?

How does the community help you connect with Jesus?

Themes

Resurrection

Forgiveness

Church as community

Prayer Suggestions:

For the Church: that we may be transformed through our encounters with the living Christ and be instruments of healing and forgiveness for those who are hurting

For a deepening of faith: that we may grow in our awareness that death has been overcome and that in Christ we shall live forever

For the gift of wisdom: that God will show us how our gifts can alleviate the needs of our communities and help us to use them to serve and build up one another

For the grace to forgive: that the Spirit of God will help us to forgive as God has forgiven us and give us the strength to be instruments of forgiveness in our families and communities

For renewal of our minds and hearts: that the Spirit will empower us to engage in prayer, participate more fully in community and share our resources more generously