ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Like newborn infants, you must long for the pure, spiritual milk,
that in him you may grow to salvation, 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 4:32-35

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul; no one claimed for his own use anything that he had, as everything they owned was held in common.

The apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, and they were all given great respect.

None of their members was ever in want, as all those who owned land or houses would sell them, and bring the money from them, to present it to the apostles; it was then distributed to any members who might be in need.

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!

1. 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.)**

2. The Lord's right hand has triumphed;
his right hand raised me up.
I shall not die, I shall live
and recount his deeds.
I was punished, I was punished by the Lord,
but not doomed to die. **(R.)**

3. 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.)**

SECOND READING — 1 John 5:1-6

A reading from the first letter of St John.

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ
has been begotten by God;
and whoever loves the Father that begot him
loves the child whom he begets.
We can be sure that we love God's children
if we love God himself and do what he has commanded us;
this is what loving God is –
keeping his commandments;
and his commandments are not difficult,
because anyone who has been begotten by God
has already overcome the world;
this is the victory over the world –
our faith.
Who can overcome the world?
Only the man who believes that Jesus is the Son of God;
Jesus Christ who came by water and blood,
not with water only,
but with water and blood;
with the Spirit as another witness –
since the Spirit is the truth.

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

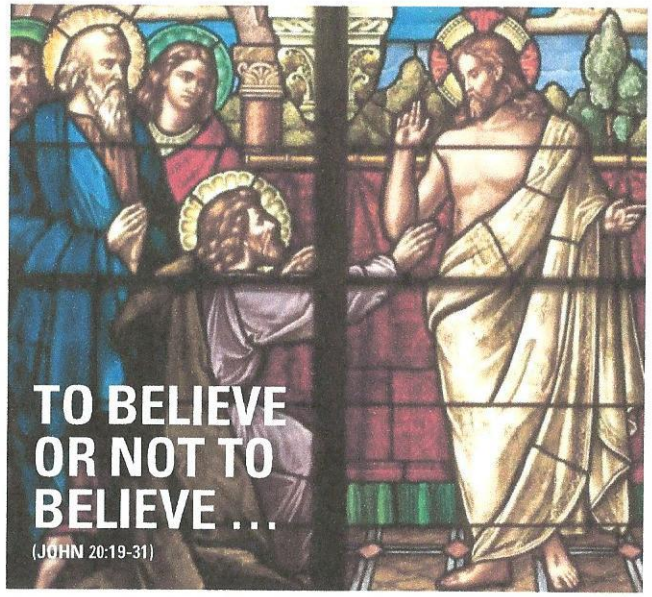
Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that our reception of this paschal Sacrament
may have a continuing effect
in our minds and hearts.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

redemptorist publications

Concordat cum originali: + Eamon Martin Archbishop of Armagh. Commentary by Fr Anthony Cassidy CSsR. The English translation of the entrance and communion antiphons, the opening prayers, prayers over the gifts, gloria, creed, and prayers after communion from The Roman Missal, © 2010 International Commission of English in the Liturgy Corporation. Jerusalem Bible version of the scriptures copyright: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., and Doubleday & Co. Inc. Responsorial psalms are copyright The Grail and/or Geoffrey Chapman Ltd. Published in Ireland by Redemptorist Communications (www.redcoms.org); Published in the UK by Redemptorist Publications (www.rpbooks.co.uk)

11 APRIL 2021
Sunday Message
2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE WORD



Stained glass window depicting Thomas' encounter with the risen Jesus

Our Gospel passage today relates two occasions when the disciples experience the risen Jesus among them. The first takes place on the evening of Easter Sunday, when Jesus had made himself known to Mary Magdalene. The setting has a negative tone, that of fear on the part of the disciples, fear which turns to joy as Jesus' promise that they would see him again is fulfilled.

One of the differences between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics is that, in John's account, the disciples have no part in Jesus' ministry. There are no "apostles", only "disciples". Jesus acts alone. Now, the risen Jesus commissions the disciples to carry on his work and bestows on them the Holy Spirit by breathing on them in a gesture reminiscent of the Lord God infusing the breath of life into the first human being. As well as bringing eternal life, the gift of the Holy Spirit empowers the disciples to forgive or retain sins, which will be part of their mission.

A week later, Thomas, the disciple who represents the sceptical point of view, encounters the risen Jesus for himself. Jesus challenges him to set aside his doubts about the testimony of the others by testing the reality of Jesus' wounds. Thomas does not actually touch Jesus' hands and side, but makes the supreme declaration of faith in Jesus as "My Lord and my God!"

The Gospel according to John ends with the statement often called "the Johannine Beatitude", with Jesus saying to Thomas, and therefore to all of us, whom Thomas represents, "Happy [Blessed] are those who have not seen and yet believe." ■

SAY

Blessed am I who have not seen and yet believe.
(see John 20:29)

REFLECT

The main theme running through the Fourth Gospel is that of believing. In the various characters who appear in dialogue or meetings with Jesus, John presents us with different reactions to Jesus and his message. In our passage today, Jesus commissions his disciples to continue his mission of confronting people and bringing them to a point of crisis or decision as to whether they will believe or not. Jesus actually says to Thomas, "Do not be an unbelieving person, but a believing one". In the mission of passing on the good news, a positive decision will be expressed by the person being baptised and entering a new life with the risen Jesus, with their sins forgiven. A negative choice will result in not being baptised.

The celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation developed in the Church well after the writing of the Gospel accounts in response to difficult situations which affected the community as a whole. The practice of individual confession came later again. Although the forgiving or retaining of sins may suggest to us this familiar practice, we might bear in mind that the Gospel text refers to the decision of the person about accepting baptism. The disciples are not being given the power or the right to determine whether or not someone deserves to be absolved of their faults. It is the person who judges themselves by deciding to believe or not. ■

LEARN

The noun "faith" does not occur in the Fourth Gospel: the verb "to believe" is found nearly one hundred times:

Belief in Jesus is, therefore, not something we "possess", but something we "do" or "put into practice".

The individuals who appear in the Gospel according to John, such as Thomas, represent different types of people and their reaction to Jesus and his message.

DO

As you close your door in the evening, put yourself in the place of the disciples: be aware that the risen Lord is with you with his loving (not judgemental) presence.