

2nd Sunday of Easter C

*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. (Ap 1:17f)*



First Reading

Acts 5:12-16

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.

Second Reading

Apocalypse 1:9-13.17-19

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 lampstands 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."

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.

Meditation

"We have seen the Lord!" The risen Lord appeared to his disciples. Only Thomas was absent. Jesus showed them the wounds of his passion, shared with them his peace, and breathed on them the Spirit who would bring the work of salvation to fulfilment through them. But Thomas, who shared the experience only by hearsay, demanded physical proof.

We are surprised by his change of heart. Accepting the risk of faith is not easy. Thomas reminds us of ourselves with our need to touch. He mistrusts any claim upon his faith not rooted in daily experience. The Lord accepts this need. Eight days later he takes Thomas at his word and gives in to his demand, "Put your hand into my side. Do not persist in your unbelief, but believe!"

Shall we, the believers of the twentieth century, remain unmoved by the liturgical celebration of the Easter season? Are we content simply to repeat, "Blest are they who have not seen and have believed?" Thomas' experience must become ours. We must strive to make tangible the power of the resurrection in our lives. We must allow the power of the Lord to heal the wounds begotten by oppression. Our sense of wonder leaves us open to the surprise of faith. Thus we can believe in the seemingly impossible and do all we can to give flesh to our hope. May we so live that Jesus becomes for each of us, "my Lord and my God!"