

## Closing Prayer

God of life,  
source of all faith,  
through the waters of baptism  
you have raised us up in Jesus  
and given us life that endures.

Day by day refine our faith,  
that we who have not seen the Christ  
may truly confess him as our Lord and God,  
and share the blessedness of those who believe.

Grant this through Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God for ever and ever.

*Opening prayers: the ICEL collects. 1997 · Easter 2<sup>2</sup>*

CPL • LBC Year B Easter 2.odt • 2021-03-20

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<sup>2</sup> *Opening prayers : scripture-related collects for the years A, B and C from the sacramentary / International Commission on English in the Liturgy. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 1999.*

Lectionary-based Catechesis • Year B

## The Second Sunday of Easter

### Principal Service readings

Acts 4.32-35	The early Christian community
Psalm 133	Brotherly love
1 John 1.1 – 2.2	Living in the light of God, breaking with sin
John 20.19-31	Post-resurrection appearances of Jesus to disciples

### Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,  
speak to our hearts in the stillness,  
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,  
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;  
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

### Gospel Reading

#### *Appearances to the disciples*

<sup>19</sup>When it was evening on the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' <sup>20</sup>After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' <sup>22</sup>When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

<sup>24</sup>But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

<sup>26</sup>A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' <sup>27</sup>Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' <sup>28</sup>Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' <sup>29</sup>Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

<sup>30</sup>Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup>But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

John 20.19-31 NRSV<sup>1</sup>

## Comments and Questions

The stories about the resurrected Jesus continue with mystery, as Jesus appears in the room when the doors have been locked (John 20.19). Up to then most of the disciples had missed out on seeing the risen Jesus, but now they have an opportunity as he shows them the marks of his passion. Earlier in the same chapter Mary Magdalene has told the disciples she has seen the Lord (20.18), but it is not clear whether they believed her. Here now the other disciples say the same to Thomas, who wasn't with them when Jesus appeared. Thomas, however, refuses to believe unless he sees for himself (20.25). He wants Jesus to be 'touchable'.

Eight days later the risen Lord stands again before the disciples, and this time Thomas is with them. Jesus invites Thomas to see for himself, and to touch his wounds (20.27). All Thomas' doubts then disappear, he responds to Jesus and says, 'My Lord and my God' (20.28). Jesus says, 'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed' (20.29). It is to pass on such life-giving faith that the evangelist has written the gospel he tells us, 'so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name' (20.31).

## Quotations

### 1

Those who believe they believe in God but without passion in the heart, without anguish of mind, without uncertainty, without doubt, and even at times without despair, believe only in the idea of God, and not in God himself.

Madeleine L'Engle. 1918–2007

<sup>1</sup> *New Revised Standard Version Bible* is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

### 2

Scratch the surface of any cynic, and you will find a wounded idealist underneath. Because of previous pain or disappointment, cynics make their conclusions about life before the questions have even been asked. This means that beyond just seeing what is wrong with the world, cynics lack the courage to do something about it. The dynamic beneath cynicism is a fear of accepting responsibility.

*Faith and doubt* / John Ortberg, 2008

### 3

Faith means doubt. Faith is not the suppression of doubt. It is the overcoming of doubt, and you overcome doubt by going through it. The man of faith who has never experienced doubt is not a person of faith. Consequently, the monk is one who has to struggle in the depths of his being with the presence of doubt, and has to go through what some religions call the Great Doubt, to break through doubt into a certitude which is very, very deep because it is not his own personal certitude; it is the certitude of God himself, in us.

*The Asian journal* / of Thomas Merton. 1975

## Related topics

*For further study:*

Paschal mystery; baptism; Christology; resurrection; two great commandments: love of God and of neighbour; social teaching; justice; faith; symbols of Easter: water, blood; eucharist; moral and ethical teaching; discipleship