

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER— 27 APRIL 2025



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,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

READINGS AND REFLECTIONS

The liturgical season of Easter is structured after the pattern of the two-volume work comprising the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles in which Luke lets forty days elapse between Jesus' death and resurrection and ascension, with a further ten days before the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. However, this should not be taken as an historical timeline.

The Gospel of John from which today's reading is taken dismantles Luke's sequence of events. On the very first Sunday of the Resurrection, in the evening of the empty tomb, the risen Christ stands among the gathered apostles. He greets them with peace and sends them on mission. He breathes on them saying, *Receive the Holy Spirit*. All of this occurs on the same day.

The Paschal Mystery encompasses the whole event of the passion, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit. The presence of both the risen Lord and the Holy Spirit are dimensions of the same reality. Fortunately, the liturgical seasons give us a time of grace to embrace our baptism and enter into the fullness of this revelation.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles 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.

First Reading

The Acts of the Apostles takes up the story of the early Church after the Gospels end with Jesus' death and resurrection. In the early chapters, there are several vignettes giving an overview of the earliest Christian communities. This is the third of them.

They give an idealised picture of the Church which needs to be complemented by Paul's candid critique of the problems and struggles in the Churches he founded. Notwithstanding any factions, jealousy or failings, these overviews focus on the positives and inspire us with what is possible.

In this vignette, the community is growing and is widely praised. It is presented as continuing the ministry of Jesus, especially his healing ministry among the sick and troubled. Read it with optimism. Let it inspire and encourage the assembly.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 117:2–4, 22–27

R. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
his love is everlasting.

or

R. 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.**

○ Lord, grant us salvation;

○ 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.**

Responsorial Psalm

Once again, we respond with Psalm 117/118. The psalm is upbeat and incorporates some well-known phrases. It is a joyful song of deliverance from distress which has a particular affinity with the mystery of death and resurrection.

The response is the first verse of the psalm. Singing it should present no issues but, if it is read, the tone of voice needs to be sustained at the end of the first line and come to rest at the end of the second to let the assembly know when to come in.

There are three six-line stanzas, not the usual four-line verses. Here too, the reader needs to shape the lines with their tone of voice to cue the assembly. Eye contact will also help.

"Sons" could be read or sung as "children".

A reading from the book of the 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.'

A reading from the holy Gospel **according to John 20:19–31**

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

Second Reading

This is the first of five Second Readings which are taken from the Book of Revelation or the Apocalypse. Probably written by a disciple of John (not John himself), it is addressed to a persecuted Church to give them hope.

It is a highly imaginative work that needs to be proclaimed and heard in the mode of poetic fantasy or legend. Its visions and symbols evoke the cosmic battle between good and evil and assure the Christian community of the ultimate triumph of good.

Interpretation of this book will be misleading and mistaken if one attempts to apply it to recent or current events. It is best not to try to give specific meaning to particular details.

Today's reading describes the risen Christ in glory: he is the Living One. As we said when we marked the design on the Easter Candle: *Christ yesterday and today, the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and the Omega. All time belongs to him and all the ages. To him be glory and power through every age and forever.*

Gospel

This Gospel passage is read every year on the Second Sunday because it recounts the events of the evening of Easter Day and also of its octave, that is today. Here Jesus' disciples encounter the risen Lord, and after a week, so too does Thomas who was not there on Easter Sunday evening.

The fledgling community is filled with the Spirit and commissioned to continue the ministry of Christ. The risen Christ is in their midst. But then, as now, this presence remains something of a mystery. It is not like a person who wakes up from a coma. Yes, the disciples can see and Thomas can touch his wounds. This is not an apparition; he is real. And yet he is able to stand among them with a greeting of peace even though the doors were locked. We say "seeing is believing" but there is more here than meets the eye.

The encounter with the risen Lord is transformative. The disciples move from fear to astonishment to joy when they see the Lord. Thomas moves from his refusal to believe to faith and veneration. The challenge for us who hear the gospel is the same. John concludes his narrative by saying that he has written all these things down so *that you too may believe that Jesus is the Christ... and have life through his name.*

Can our proclamation of the text at Mass achieve this exalted purpose for the assembly?

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.

BLESSING FOR EASTER

May almighty God bless us through today's Easter Solemnity and, in his compassion, defend us from every assault of sin.

Amen.

And may he, who restores us to eternal life in the Resurrection of his Only Begotten, endow us with the prize of immortality.

Amen.

Now that the days of the Lord's Passion have drawn to a close, may we who celebrate the gladness of the Paschal Feast come with Christ's help, and exulting in spirit, to those feasts that are celebrated in eternal joy.

Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, come down on us and remain with us for ever.

Amen.

(Adapted from the Solemn Blessing for Easter, Roman Missal p. 422)

An alternative translation of the scripture readings is given here from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). This may be particularly useful for those in parishes which use the NRSV Lectionary.

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

FIRST READING (NRSV)

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles 5:12–16

Many signs and wonders were done among the people through the Apostles.
And the believers were all together in Solomon's Portico.
None of the rest dared to join them,
but the people held them in high esteem.

Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord,
great numbers of both men and women,
so that they even carried Out the sick into the streets,
and laid them on cots and mats,
in order that Peter's shadow might fall on some of them
as he came by.

A great number of people would also gather
from the towns around Jerusalem,
bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits,
and they were all cured.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (NRSV)

Psalm 118.2-4, 22-24, 25-27a (R.1)

R. Give thanks, for the Lord is good,
God's love is everlasting.
or:

R. Alleluia! (Two or three times)

Let Israel say,
"His steadfast love endures forever."
Let the house of Aaron say,
"His steadfast love endures forever."
Let those who fear the Lord say,
"His steadfast love endures forever. R.

The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.
This is the Lord's doing;
it is marvellous in our eyes.
This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it. R.

Save us, we beseech you, O Lord!
O Lord, we beseech you, give us success!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
We bless you from the house of the Lord.
The Lord is God,
and he has given us light. R.

SECOND READING (NRSV)

A reading from the book of Revelation 1:9–13, 17–19

I, John, your brother
who share with you in Jesus
the persecution and the kingdom and the patient endurance,
was on the island called Patmos
because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.
I was in the spirit on the Lord's day,
and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet
saying, "Write in a book what you see
and send it to the seven churches."

Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me,
and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,
and in the midst of the lampstands
I saw one like the Son of Man,
clothed with a long robe
and with a golden sash across his chest.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.
But he placed his right hand on me, saying,
"Do not be afraid;
I am the first and the last,
and the living one.

I was dead, but see, I am alive forever and ever
and I have the keys of Death and of Hades
Now write what you have seen,
what is, and what is to take place after this."

GOSPEL (NRSV)

A reading from the holy gospel according to John 20:19–31

It was evening on the day Jesus rose from the dead,
the first day of the week,
and the doors of the house
where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the authorities.
Jesus came and stood among them and said,
"Peace be with you."
After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side.
Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.
Jesus said to them again,
"Peace be with you.
As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

"When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,
"Receive the Holy Spirit.
If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them;
if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

But Thomas, who was called the Twin, one of the twelve,
was not with them when Jesus came.

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."

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."
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."
Thomas answered him,
"My Lord and my God!"

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."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples,
which are not written in this book.
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.