

Believing in the Risen Lord

2nd Sunday of Easter
Cycle B | April 7, 2024

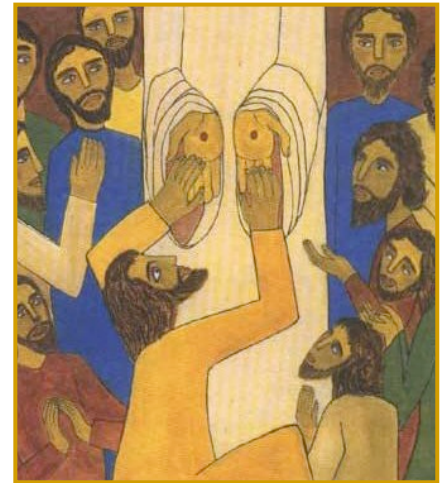
WISDOM FROM THE CELLS

I remember when I was 17 years-old... I had already been in and out of juvenile halls, camps, placements and nothing seemed to change my way of living, not even getting shot multiple times on two separate occasions. I was no longer going to school. I was selling drugs, using drugs, drinking, hanging out with the "homies" and making the most of my time because I knew my freedom and my life was coming to an end. I was having dreams of being shot and killed, and I would wake up glad it was just a bad dream. In a way, I guess that was my conscience or my soul trying to warn me to take it easy. I didn't think God was trying to tell me anything because at that time in my life, I hadn't talked to him in a while.

I can't say I stopped believing in God. I guess I just wasn't paying attention to the signs He was giving me. My life at that time was filled with death, pain, revenge, and anger, so I did whatever I could do to forget all those negative feelings. I didn't feel God was in my life because of the life I was living. Looking back on it, I know he was there the whole time watching over me and protecting me.

I know that it was in God's plan for my incarceration. It really opened my eyes and made me realize that God was with me all along, even if I didn't believe that. He knew me for the real person I was, and I am glad I finally let God into my life. My life has never been the same since, and neither have I.

- Angel, who is in a California State Prison.



PENITENTIAL RITE

**Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray:

Lord,
You appeared to the disciples behind locked doors. Enter into our lives and our hearts today. Help us to be open to your love and peace.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**



LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Acts 4: 32-35

The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all. There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need.

The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Second Reading: 1 John 5: 1-6

Beloved: Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten by God, and everyone who loves the Father loves also the one begotten by him. In this way we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whoever is begotten by God conquers the world. And the victory that conquers the world is our faith. Who indeed is the victor over the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is the one who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ, not by water alone, but by water and blood. The Spirit is the one that testifies, and the Spirit is truth.

The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 118: 2-4, 13-15, 22-24

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

Let the house of Israel say,
"His mercy endures forever."

Let the house of Aaron say,
"His mercy endures forever."

Let those who fear the LORD say,
"His mercy endures forever."

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

I was hard pressed and was falling,
but the LORD helped me.

My strength and my courage is the LORD,
and he has been my savior.

The joyful shout of victory
in the tents of the just:

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

The stone which the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.

By the LORD has this been done;
it is wonderful in our eyes.

This is the day the LORD has made;
let us be glad and rejoice in it.

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

Gospel: John 20: 19-31

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. 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." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to 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 into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But 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 Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



MEDITATION: THOMAS

*(from the eyes
of thomas)*

there was so much to do
so much to accomplish
i needed to meet
with some of
our contacts
outside the city
i would be away
for a few days

it seems these days
have felt heavy
with the responsibility
of carrying out
jesus' project
i was not going to
let fear trap me

we met for two
intensive days
so much work to do
we arrived at night
trying to escape
the police
or the soldiers
as we opened
the door

it felt good
to be here again
peering inside
friends cooking
others talking
candles blazing
everywhere

peter running over
to greet me
thomas welcome back
it is good to see you
are you hungry?

but first
i have something
to tell you
sit down thomas

jesus came to see us
he is alive

i laughed
peter
i saw what the romans
did to jesus
they never leave
prisoners alive
this is impossible

peter
i too would
like to believe
that jesus was here
but i know peter
that it is now up to us
we have a lot
of work to do

peter wondering
what to do

peter
i will not believe you
until i put my fingers
into jesus' wounds
what does that mean
that jesus is alive?
we are going
to be attacked
by the romans
if they hear of this
it could be dangerous
i really don't
believe you
i want to but i can't
i just feel like

everything is over

peter
you want me to
believe that jesus
is back with us?
what would this mean?
where is he now?
do you know what peter?
i just feel so raw
from these past days
to believe that
jesus is alive
i need proof
let's go
get something to eat
i wish i could
believe you

the next week
passed quickly
with so many details
to take care of
it was almost time
for the evening meeting
the light was soft
in the main room

as i
turned around
facing me was jesus

jesus
what are you
doing here?
peter told me
that you were alive
but it was just
too much
i have been thinking
about you these days
what would happen
if you really were alive?

how this would mean
everything would
be different?

warm tears
streaming down
my cheeks

everyone in the room
was glad to see
jesus again
but clearly
jesus was here
to speak with me

jesus saying
thomas
let's go over there
by the window
let's sit down

i was staring at
the red marks
in jesus' hands
jesus gently
taking my fingers
and placed them
into the holes
in his hands

jesus
i found it hard
to believe that
you could bring life
out of such suffering
never have i felt
so destroyed
by the events
of these days

but jesus
you really
are alive



REFLECTION: I remember a time I was doubtful and did not believe in God... I remember...
I remember...

OUR FATHER

Let us pray with confidence to the Father
in the words our Savior gave us:
**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against
us, and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**R. For the kingdom, the power and the
glory are yours, now and for ever.
Amen.**

SIGN OF PEACE

Jesus, you said to your apostles: "I leave you
peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our
sins, but on the faith of your Church, and
grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom
where you live forever and ever. **Amen.**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
R. And with your spirit.

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
grant us peace.

This is Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the
sins of the world. Happy are we who are called to
his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter
under my roof, but only say the word and
my soul shall be healed.**

COMMUNION

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray:

Jesus,

You appeared to Thomas who had been disappointed so
many times in his life, that he couldn't believe you were
alive. Like Thomas, we may sometimes doubt that you
are working powerfully in our lives, and that you can
heal our wounds and give us hope. May we learn from
Thomas by putting my fingers in your wounds to find
deep healing, so that we may bring hope to those who
are searching.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**

