

Sunday of Easter B

**First Reading** Acts 4:32-35

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.

**Second Reading** 1 John 5:1-6

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.

**Gospel** 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 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 fulfillment 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!"