

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.

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

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ENCOUNTERING OUR RISEN LORD

Thomas is one of the most clearly defined characters in the Gospels. Born loser, realist, pessimist, he has missed out on the Easter night appearance of Jesus. He won't believe that Jesus has been raised simply on the other disciples' claim 'We have seen the Lord'. He insists on seeing, touching, hearing for himself.

Eight days later, with divine 'courtesy', Jesus is prepared to meet Thomas' conditions exactly. But, at the sight of his risen Lord, Thomas abandons them. He, the late-comer, the obtuse one, goes on to make the most exalted act of faith contained in the gospel: 'My Lord and my God!' It is Thomas, the hesitant, the doubter, who brings out the full identity of Jesus.

Jesus adds a comment that brings us into the picture too: 'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe'. Thomas has believed because, like the other disciples present in the room, he has now seen the risen Lord. Succeeding generations of believers will not have the privilege of seeing the risen Lord. We have to believe simply the testimony handed down in the Church. We are not at a disadvantage. We are in fact 'blessed' — because from us a faith greater than that of Thomas will be drawn. And the greater the faith, the more scope for the power of God to enter and transform our lives. The gospel imparts to those who believe all the knowledge necessary for a life-giving encounter with the Lord.

Brendan Byrne, SJ

FIRST READING

Acts 5:12-16

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

The numbers of men and women who came to believe in the Lord increased steadily.

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.

■ The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 117:2-4, 22-27. R. v. 1

R. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting, (or Alleluia!)

1. 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.**
2. The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. / 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.**
3. O Lord, grant us salvation / O 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.**

SECOND READING

Apoc 1:9-13,17-19

A reading from the first letter of Apocalypse
I was dead and now I am to live for ever and ever.

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 lamp-stands 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.'

■ The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Jn 20:29

Alleluia, alleluia! You believe in me, Thomas, because you have seen me; happy those who have not seen me, but still believe! Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Jn 20:19-31

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

After eight days, Jesus came in and stood among them.

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.