

Rathfarnham Lectio Divina Group

Lectio will resume on 1st May 2025 at 7.30 in the Parish Centre

Reflect, meditate and pray, on each Sunday's Gospel



Second Sunday of Easter 27 April 2025

John 20:19 When it was evening on that day, 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." ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." ²² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

John 20:24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ 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."

John 20:26 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." ²⁷ 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." ²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ 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."

John 20:30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹ 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.

Mary Magdalene recognised Jesus because he called her by name; now he is known through the wounds of his passion. These are important themes in the fourth gospel where there is a strong emphasis on faith as being rooted in a personal encounter with the Christ they have known. As if to drive that point home, we learn that Thomas is not with the others when Jesus appears to them and he steadfastly refuses to believe unless he meets the Lord for himself. When he does, he too sees the wounds of the passion, and he too comes to faith. However, the real aim of the story becomes apparent in the words of Jesus who describes as blessed those generations of Christians whose Easter faith is not dependant on a tangible proof but of a relationship of loving trust. The evangelist then goes on to explain why he wrote his gospel. All the stories are told so that we can come to believe that Jesus does indeed reveal the love of God and, inspired by this faith, we might be fully alive as we continue on our homeward journey.

Reflection

These readings are a reminder to us that an Easter faith is something alive and vibrant and so they challenge us to look again at how we give expression to our belief in Christ. The philosopher Nietzsche once remarked that if Christians want others to believe in their Redeemer, why they don't look a little more redeemed? We would do well to reflect on this criticism. If we practice our religion simply as a form of insurance for the after life then we are completely failing to understand its richness and the way in which it empowers us to the full in the here and now. At Easter we are not being asked to believe in *something* (i.e. the resurrection), we are being asked to believe in *someone*, the crucified and risen Christ.

SEAN GOAN - Let the Reader Understand

Thought for the day

How did any of us make the journey towards faith in Christ? No doubt a great part of it is simply what we received—usually from family. At some point, did I make a conscious choice? Perhaps at other times, I felt like walking away from the faith project? What kept me going? Did a more personal ownership of faith result? Perhaps I felt the intuition of John O'Donahue, "Faith is helpless attraction to the divine." In spite of everything, in spite of myself, somehow it is part of who I am.

KIERAN O'MAHONY OSA - www.tarsus.ie

Mary Magdalene has shared her experience with the disciples and has declared that Jesus is alive, but they remain closed up in a house with the doors locked for fear of the Jews. The announcement of the resurrection does not dispel their fears. It does not have the power to awaken joy in them. The evangelist evokes in a few words their helplessness in the midst of a hostile environment. Night is falling. Their fear prompts them to keep all doors safely closed. They only want to be safe. It is their only concern. Nobody thinks of the mission they've received from Jesus.

It is not enough to know that the Lord has risen. It is not enough to hear the Easter message. Those disciples miss the most important thing: the experience of feeling Jesus alive in their midst. It is only when Jesus is the centre of the community that he becomes a source of life, of joy and of peace for the believers.

The disciples are filled with joy on seeing the Lord. This is what always happens. There is joy in a Christian community where it is possible to "see" Jesus alive in the midst of all. Our communities will not overcome their fears, nor will they feel the joy of the faith, or know the peace that only Christ can give as long as Jesus does not occupy the centre of our meetings, gatherings and assemblies, and as long as he is overshadowed by others.

Perhaps our main task today is to place Jesus at the heart of our communities – a Jesus we, know, love and follow with passion. It is when we commit ourselves in this way that the parish and the diocese are at their best.

JOSÉ A PAGOLA - *Following in the Footsteps of Jesus*

Thomas teaches us the important lesson that we must not separate the resurrection from the cross, since we are called to be followers of Jesus. He also teaches us the truth of the Church and of our individual spiritual growth. We cannot live the life of grace, the "risen life", authentically unless we bear in our bodies the wounds of the cross. This means being conscious that we develop the capacity to love and to be loved only by dying to ourselves. Our wounds are also a constant reminder of our frailty, and that it is God's grace that raises us up to new life.

As always in our meditation we must not limit ourselves to personal relationships. We celebrate the resurrection faith lived by communities, nations and cultures.

(Fr John recently deceased please remember him in your prayers)
MICHEL DE VERTEUIL - *Lectio Divina on the Sunday Gospels*

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. "Peace be with you" was the greeting of Jesus on meeting his frightened apostles. Who has come to you bringing peace at times when you were frightened? For whom have you been an agent of peace?
2. Thomas, doubting and questioning, is possibly a person with whom we can identify. What part have doubts and questions played on your faith journey? How has your faith been strengthened by such moments?
3. Note the way Jesus dealt with Thomas. He did not give out because he doubted. He took him where he was and led him along to see the truth of his resurrection. Who has been that kind of a teacher for you, gently taking you where you were and leading you on to a deeper knowledge of some truth about life? For whom have you been that kind of teacher?
4. "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet believed". That requires great trust. Perhaps you have had the experience of being trusted without having had to prove every step along the way. What was it like to be trusted in that way? Who have you been able to trust in a similar manner?

JOHN BYRNE OSA - *Intercom*

Reading the news can be upsetting these days. It seems there is nothing but bad news. We sometimes lose hope and go through shaky patches. We find ourselves asking: where is God in all this?

In today's gospel we meet Thomas. His friend has been brutally killed. Traumatized and grieving, Thomas is not ready to hear the comforting words of his companions who say they have seen Jesus. His momentary wobble has earned him the nickname 'doubting Thomas'. Yet a week later the man labelled doubter gives us one of the greatest expressions of faith.

We know life can be painful and messy, even unbearable at times. Thomas is a saint for those times of darkness. In our darkest days, may we encounter the healing presence of the risen Christ.

Recall a time when you experienced tragedy or pain. How did you react? What helped you to open up the doors that had become closed? Reflecting on such situations can help us when we next encounter tough times.

TRÍONA DOHERTY & JANE MELLETT –Go Deeper