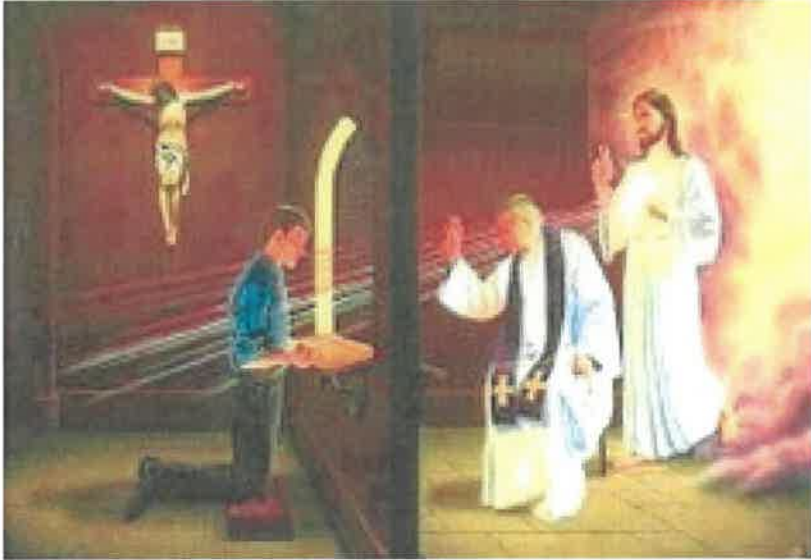


PASTOR'S MEANDERINGS

23 – 24 APRIL 2022

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER SUNDAY OF DIVINE MERCY



SUNDAY REFLECTION

In the First Reading Luke presents the resurrection as a motive for faith. This is different than the usual emphasis we see in phrases such as “the end is near, repent,” which challenges us to renewal in fear of judgment. Luke’s emphasis is to tell us that God is so involved in human history that Jesus rose to be with us continually. This is so powerful that we must ask ourselves, “what are we going to-do about it?” we no have the responsibility of informing people everywhere of the way God’s power can affect their lives. So many signs and wonders can still be worked for those who believe. We today experience the resurrection in the way God’s power is active in our lives.

The call of the first reading to celebrate the power of God in our lives is complemented with the beautiful responsorial psalm that gives praise to God for the many signs of love, predilection, and saving grace. It is a psalm that each one of us can recite, giving personal individual examples of the points referred to in every line.

The second reading comes from the early visions of the Book of Revelation, and reminds readers of the power of the risen Lord, and also of the personal interest of the risen Lord in each of us. He commissions John to write to the various Churches and send them the guiding teachings that each of them needs.

The gospel reading is the conclusion to the gospel of John, since the section that follows – next Sunday’s reading – is an appendix. It tells us that the writing of the gospel is an undertaking motivated by the desire to help others grow in faith. John presents only seven miracles – “signs” he calls them, because he is convinced that people who reflect on what Jesus has done will deepen their faith in Him. In light of the focus of the readings today it is also important to note that John never uses the noun “faith,” but only the verb “believing.” For the writer of the fourth gospel, people do not deepen faith by intellectual assent, by public proclamation, by regular recital of the creed, but only by doing things differently because of their believing. Faith is an actin not a designation.

So, looking over our readings in light of the post-Easter challenge to deepen our faith, we gather as a Christian people and confidently identify ourselves as a community born because of the resurrection and because of all the wonderful acts of God, communal and personal, that we have experienced because of the risen Lord. It is an exciting experience to realize how much the Lord is personally active in our lives – perhaps more exciting than entering the empty tomb. But as God wrote to guide each Church through John in the Revelation, so too God never abandons us as chosen people, but sends us guidance through the Holy Spirit, through each other, through the ministers of the Church, and through the events of our changing times. We may not witness the spectacular events of God’s presence in history, we may not be able to see and touch His wounds, but this liturgy calls us to reaffirm our faith and to be ready to live it in daily action. “Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have come to believe.

STEWARDSHIP: “Blessed are they who have not seen and yet believed,” Jesus says in today’s Gospel. For those who have not seen to believe, however, we must be good stewards of our faith, living it joyfully and haring it generously. The, in our time too, “men and women in great numbers” will be “added to the Lord.”

READINGS THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

1 MAY '22

Acts 5:27-32, 40-41: The apostles find themselves on trial before the Sanhedrin. Peter takes the opportunity to proclaim the basic teachings about Jesus.

Rv. 5:11-14: In the Easter mysteries we celebrated the victory of the Lamb. Only He, the risen Lord, has power to open the seven seals on the book that describes the future of humanity..

Jn. 21:1-19: The risen Jesus appears to the disciples in Galilee. He challenges the quality of His disciples' faith, hope and love. Peter's denials are forgiven and Jesus commissions him as shepherd of the flock.

ONE SUNDAY MULTIPLE TITLES

Doubting Thomas Sunday Second Sunday of Easter Divine Mercy Sunday

St Thomas appears to have been an extraordinary man. He was the only Apostle who went on to preach the Good News outside the then, known world, the Roman Empire. He went to India. And he was to pay a high price for his doubting. People just wouldn't believe him. His gospel would not be accepted into the Church's Canon of Scriptures. How's that for Karma, Thomas? For those who are uncomfortable with that Gospel, we can just stay with what he shares in common with the other evangelists - The Kingdom is to be found within and, listen those of you who have ears that hear, eyes that see. What does that even mean? There are clues in the accounts of the appearances of Jesus. It would seem that in all of them, the first prerequisite is to stop. All the Apostles stop what they are doing. No more visits to the Temple, isolated in the upper room, getting off the road to where they were going (Emmaus) or stopping their livelihood, fishing. Stopping is pretty fundamental to the process, it would seem. (And St Paul could give you a lecture on being stopped in your tracks.) It all makes absolute sense. Didn't Jesus describe his kingdom as something very subtle, like a young plant growing, you can't see it or hear it, but it's growing? When we stop we move from Martha mode, all the well meaning activity, to Mary - just giving attention, listening, absorbing. We at least give ourselves a chance, if we stop. Thomas doesn't believe. It's a matter of the head, logic. It's his starting position. Then Jesus shows him his wounds. Logic tells him then that it's true. Jesus has indeed risen from the dead. In that moment though, something else happens, something which made him cry out, "My Lord and my God." He moved from his head, to his heart. From believing or disbelieving, to realizing it. It is the heart which is suddenly responding, not the head. (Jesus spoke about this, the kingdom will remain hidden to those who think they will discover it via logic. It won't happen.) From that wonderful moment of realization, Thomas' ears began to hear, his eyes began to see with much more clarity and sensitivity than he had previously known. For the Emmaus bound duo it's something slightly different. Their starting point IS belief. They are already convinced. They ask their fellow traveler - "Where have you been? Haven't you heard what's been going on?" They tell the stranger excitedly stuff he already knows. I always envisage a Scottish Jesus there saying in a droll voice, "Is that right, aye?!" Thankfully, Jesus wasn't Scottish, so instead he sets about explaining the scriptures to them, with such insight and passion that their hearts are burning within them. They've already made the move from head to heart. But the weird thing is, both

Apostles are actually unaware that it is happening within them in that moment. It is only later that the realization hits them - "Didn't our hearts burn within us" It was already there, they just didn't see it until later, until their ears and eyes began to open. I used to always listen to the gospel where Jesus tells his followers to take the plank out of their own eyes, then they will see clearly enough to help their brother with the splinter in his, as a comment about hypocrisy and judgement of others. Now I see it differently. It's more connected to today's gospel - for those whose sins you forgive they are forgiven, for those whose sins you retain, they are retained. So if you feel the need to draw attention to someone else's sin, you'd better make sure that you are seeing clearly enough to make that call. So where is this kingdom where seeing and hearing take on a different dimension, a different depth? We know it isn't up there in the sky, otherwise the birds would get there before us. It isn't in the ocean, where the fish will get first dibs. It isn't in our moral virtue because tax collectors and prostitutes will get there before us. It isn't in our intelligence because mere children get there before us. Where is this within? The story is told of a retired teacher who decided to clean out his attic. In the process he came across an old box filled with copies of report cards of former students. As he looked at the names, he remembered each one, their dramas, their problems, their qualities. And as he reflected, something else began to emerge. He realized that he had been so patient with the one who was slow, encouraging to the one who was so down on himself, he provided challenge to the one who was bored, a listening ear to the one who had problems at home. Suddenly, a bit like the Emmaus Apostles, it all became clear - his heart had been burning within him all along, he just never saw it until now. And now, when those graces of patience, encouragement, challenge and the ability to listen are sorely needed, they are all right there, within him. And he's using them now to such divine effect. Should that be happening to each of us in this Easter Season? The discovery that what you have been searching for, was actually there all along? It just needed you to see it, to become aware of it. Jesus said - YOU are the light of the world. The problem with most of us is not a question of belief that, that is true, it's a question of realizing it, of moving from our heads to our hearts. If you stop for a moment and just look at your last month, haven't you noticed that something beautiful is happening within you, that some 'grace' within you - who you really are - is suddenly emerging, apparently out of nowhere? If not, look again. It's there. When Jesus once again appears to the apostles on the lake shore a still broken Peter, so aware of his recent failures, his cowardice, lack of courage, his shame is also there, perhaps off to the side. I guess we can all identify with that. But then he gets a glimpse of the Light of the World, standing on the shore but more importantly, within himself, in amongst that brokenness, and uselessness - a fisherman who can't catch fish is pretty useless - and shame. Then ... well, the Risen Lord teaches him of the possibilities that await him if he just has a belief in the Christ who is within him and let that belief move from his head to his heart, a boat so filled to the brim that he can scarcely accept what is unfolding before his eyes. A lovely moment where he looks at the filled boat and asks himself - just how on earth did that possibly happen?

PRAYERS

Prayer to St. Thomas the Apostle, Pray for Me

Lord Jesus, St. Thomas doubted Your resurrection until he touched Your wounds. After Pentecost, You called him to become a missionary in India, but he doubted again and said no.

He changed his mind only after being taken into slavery by a merchant who happened to be going to India. Once he was cured of his doubt, You freed him and he began the work You had called him to do. As the patron saint against doubt, I ask him to pray for me when I question the direction in which You are leading me. Forgive me for mistrusting You, Lord, and help me to grow from the experience. Saint Thomas, pray for me. Amen.

Divine Mercy 3 O'Clock Prayer



You expired, O Jesus,
but the source of life gushed forth for souls
and an ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world.
O Fount of Life,
unfathomable Divine Mercy,
envelop the whole world
and empty Yourself out upon us.
O Blood and Water,
which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus
as a fount of mercy for us,
I trust in You.
Amen.

**LITURGICAL SCHEDULE
SECOND WEEK OF EASTER
24 APRIL - 1 MAY 2022**

Saturday 23 Apr Within the Octave of Ester
 8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Gloria Preface of Easter I, Eucharistic Prayer I
 (Intention:
 9:00 a.m. Baptism
 10:00 a.m. Funeral
 1:30 – 4:30 p.m. Confessions
 5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass Second Sunday Easter Divine Mercy Sunday
 Proper of the Day, Gloria, Sequence, Creed, Easter Preface I,
 Eucharistic Prayer I
 (Intention:)

Sunday 24 Apr Second Sunday of Easter Divine Mercy Sunday
 7:00 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Gloria, Creed, Easter Preface I,
 Eucharistic Prayer I
 8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Gloria, Creed, Easter Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer I
 11:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Gloria, Creed, Easter Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer I
 2:00 p.m. Brig Mass

Monday 25 Apr Day Off

Tuesday 26 Apr Easter Weekday 2
 8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Easter Preface II, Eucharistic Prayer II
 (Intention: Edward Boone RIP)

Wednesday 27 Apr Easter Weekday 2
 6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of , Easter Preface III, Eucharistic Prayer, III
 (Intention: Pat Day Family)
 7:00 – 8:00 a.m. Confessions
 8:30 a.m. No Mass
 12:00 p.m. Mass Portsmouth Naval Hospital

Thursday 28 Apr Easter Weekday 2 St. Peter Chanel, St. Louis Grignon de Montfort
 8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Easter Preface IV, Eucharistic Prayer II
 (Intention: Frank Bora RIP)
 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. Confessions
 6:30 p.m. Mass Proper of Day, Easter Preface IV, Eucharistic Prayer II
 (Intention: Marjorie Thornton RIP)

Friday 29 Apr M St. Catherine of Siena Doctor
 8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of St., Easter Preface V, Eucharistic Prayer III
 (Intention: Tom & Gail Manos)
 12:00 p.m. PNH Mass

Saturday 30 Apr NO MORNING MASS
 For the weekend Mission Co-op priest from Wytheville/Pulaski