

The Second Sunday of Easter

Morning Prayer Rite II

Alleluia, Raise the Gospel

sung by the Choir

Welcome & Announcements

Opening Hymn: We Walk By Faith

We walk by faith and not by sight;
No gracious words we hear from him
Who spo--ke as none e'er spoke;
But we be - lie--ve him near.

We may not touch his hands and side;
Nor follow wh----ere he trod;
But in his prom-ise we rejoice;
And cry, "My Lo--rd and God!"

Opening Sentence

Presider Alleluia! Christ is risen!

People **The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Presider Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Pascha Nostrum & Psalter

Presider Lord, open our lips.

People **And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

All **Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia!**

Presider Alleluia. The Lord is risen indeed: Come let us adore him. Alleluia.

Christ our Passover **read in unison**

Alleluia.

Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us;

therefore let us keep the feast,

Not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil,

All

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The Lessons

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

Read by Emily Hursh

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith-- being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire-- may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

A reading from the Gospel of John.

Read by Jan Hanen

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." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then 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." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

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

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." 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." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 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."

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

The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Homily - SEE PAGE 7

Deacon John Musco

The Prayers

Presider The Lord be with you

People **And also with you**

Presider Let us pray.

In this time of bewilderment and fear, we ask you to give us the courage to take care of one another as Jesus did. For those who are ill, especially those who are frightened and alone, for those who cannot access healthcare, for those who are homeless and lost; Risen Lord,

Hear our prayer.

In the midst of our sadness and grief, we ask you to give us words to comfort one another. For those who are dying, and for those who have already died from this virus, for those who care for them and for those with no one to care for them; Risen Lord,

Hear our prayer.

In the midst of our own anxiety, we ask for the courage to support one another as you would. For those who are poor, hungry, and homeless; for those who have lost their employment; those who fear the present and the future; for our government and financial institutions and those who lead them; Risen Lord,

Hear our prayer.

In the midst of our struggle to ensure a healthy future for all people, we ask you to give us the hope that surpasses our current understanding. For healthcare workers, spiritual leaders and our faith communities, for artists and poets, for prophets and teachers; Risen Lord,

Hear our prayer.

Remembering that you have promised to hear our prayers, we offer our intercessions and thanksgivings:

*** we will unmute all for intercessions. Please give silence after each person speaks before you add your petition. If you do not have a petition or if there is too much background noise in your home, please mute yourself. You can also write your prayer in the chat.*

The Lord's Prayer sung by all

Collect of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, who in the Paschal mystery established the new covenant of reconciliation: Grant that all who have been reborn into the fellowship of Christ's Body may show forth in their lives what they profess by their faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Said in unison

The General Thanksgiving

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.
We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up our selves to your service,
and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.

The Benediction

Presider May Almighty God, who has redeemed us and made us his children through the resurrection of his Son our Lord, bestow upon you the riches of his blessing.
Amen.

May God, who through the water of baptism has raised us from sin into newness of life, make you holy and worthy to be united with Christ for ever. Amen.

May God, who has brought us out of bondage to sin into true and lasting freedom in the Redeemer, bring you to your eternal inheritance. Amen.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn: He is Risen

He is risen, he is risen! Tell it out with joyful voice:

He has burst his three days prison; let the whole wide earth rejoice:

Death is conquered, we are free, Christ has won the victory.

He is risen, he is risen! He hath opened heaven's gate:

We are free from sin's dark prison, risen to a holier state;

And a brighter Easter beam on our longing eyes shall stream.

Parting Hymn

May the Lord, mighty Lord, bless you and keep you forever

Bind your heart to his heard, with a bond that nothing can sever

Give you light on the uphill road, and courage in every endeavor

May the Lord, mighty Lord, bless you and keep you forever.

Sermon John Musco Easter 2, 4-19-20 John 20.19-31

I find it fascinating to hear these Easter stories through the perspective of living in the midst of our current crisis. Perhaps we, at this time, are more in synch with the experience of the disciples at the time of the first Easter than we have ever been before.

The story today begins on the evening of the first day of the week. This is the day that Mary Magdalene went early to Jesus' tomb and discovered it had been opened. She summoned Peter and another disciple, and they all saw that the tomb was empty. The disciples went away, perplexed. And then the risen Jesus reveals himself to Mary and she is instructed to tell the disciples of this incredible news.

That evening we see that this news had hardly penetrated their being. The disciples are huddled together in their room and the doors of the house are locked for fear of the Jews, that is the temple authorities. Naturally, after the crucifixion of Jesus, any followers of him were in grave danger. In this state, is it surprising that they doubted the testimony of a woman with a fantastic story about Jesus rising from the dead?

Well, look at where we're at right now! Like the disciples, we are isolated in our homes, with the doors locked. We too are living in fear, in fear of infection by Covid 19. Like the disciples, our lives have been constricted, narrowed down to the essentials as we wait out the pandemic. Like them, we are overwhelmed with doubt. One of the many scary things about our current situation is that no one knows when we can open our locked doors and resume living fully and deeply with each other.

When will we be able to do the ordinary things that we humans do? When can we, without fear, gather together as church? When can we be comfortable to shake hands, hug each other—all the ways we express our love for each other? When can we gather together and share a meal? We know that these things are fundamental to our Christian life. It's very hard to see through our doubts, to know that yes, a better time is coming.

But Jesus doesn't leave his disciples to be paralyzed by their fears and doubts. It is that very evening, Easter evening, that he appears to them. The locked doors don't stop him. He says: "Peace be with you." They rejoice—they have seen the Lord! But Jesus doesn't leave it at that. He breaks through their paralysis of fear and doubt. He summons them to action—"As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

But Thomas was not with the disciples when Jesus appeared to them. Despite their testimony, he cannot overcome his doubt. He refuses to believe "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." He must not only see the risen Lord but must touch his wounds!

So here we are, a week later. Nothing has changed. The disciples are still shut up in that room, with the doors shut. But Jesus hasn't given up on them. Despite the closed doors, he appears

again to them. Addressing Thomas, he invites him to touch his wounds. Thomas immediately says, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus responds: "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Poor Thomas has gotten the title of "Doubting Thomas." But he is our disciple, for we, like him, find it so hard to overcome our doubts. Jesus has compassion for Thomas and all the disciples. He does not condemn them for their doubts. Jesus is with them in their pain. With his presence he is healing them in the constriction of their lives, as they are disabled by doubt and fear. As always, he is showing them the way into the fullness of their lives.

Even in the best of times, which these are definitely not, it is so hard to let go of our doubts and let Jesus in. He can be with us now, despite the locked doors.

We look upon doubt as a fatal flaw. We fear to express our doubts to others. It makes us vulnerable. Jesus doesn't look at it this way. Having the experience of human life, he knows that doubt is part of being human. We so readily assume that doubt stands in opposition to belief, to faith.

Anne Lamont tells us: "The opposite of faith is not doubt, but certainty. Certainty is missing the point entirely. Faith includes noticing the mess, the emptiness and discomfort, and letting it be there until some light returns. Faith also means reaching deeply within, for the sense one was born with, the sense, for example, to go for a walk."*

If ever there was a time to notice the mess, the emptiness and discomfort, this is the time. As Lamont says, we have to let them be there for now. Paying attention to these things will help us to work through our doubts and be ready for the light of hope to return.

In this time of affliction, a line from Lamentations has resonated with me: *"It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord."* Perhaps now is our time for watchful waiting.

We are all in a totally new situation. All of us are seeking the way forward. How can we be disciples in this time of doubt and powerlessness? I would be very suspicious of anyone who says they know how.

What I do know is that I need help. My connection with you at this time is immensely precious. And I know that my connection to you will help me to let Jesus in. We, our beloved community, can be with each other in support and love as we live through our doubts and fears. Jesus is with us, just as he was with Thomas.

*Anne Lamont, *Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith*