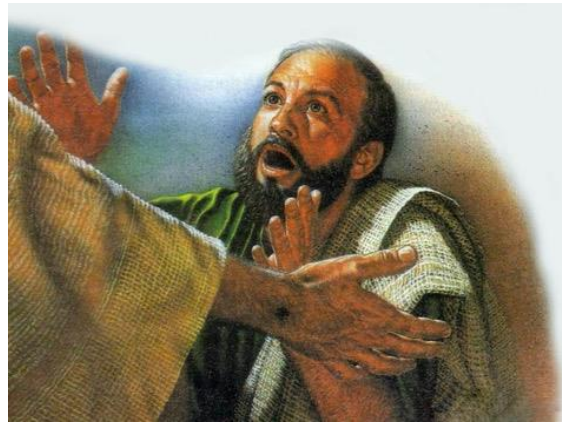


Sunday 7th April 2024

Second Sunday of Easter



**Alleluia! Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

In our Gospel reading today, we hear more about Jesus's resurrection, the disciples' reaction – and the story of St Thomas (John 20: 19-31)

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.

It's still Eastertime – just because we have eaten our Easter eggs, it doesn't mean that Easter has lost its impact! The empty tomb is only the beginning of the story. We are Easter People and Jesus's resurrection means life is never the same again! We have the most wonderful message to pass on to other people!

Our Gospel reading reminds us that Jesus's disciples were still afraid and hiding behind locked doors. There were many people in Jerusalem who would have had them arrested and possibly killed for being followers of Jesus. They must have been very nervous on that first Easter evening, as well as grieving over Jesus's death and uncertain about the future. Huddled together sadly in the locked room, suddenly everything changed! Jesus was there among them!

What a contrast – from fear to faith, from locked doors to Jesus's unlimited power! The disciples were plunged into joy – and Jesus was not going to stop there!

John, in his gospel, tells us that this was the occasion when the disciples received the Holy Spirit – when they were given power through God's being - and entrusted with the special task of telling others about Jesus.

Not all of the disciples were there on that evening though. I wonder where Thomas was? Perhaps he had been sent out to see what the word on the street was about what had happened to Jesus and whether anyone was talking about the empty tomb? Poor Thomas! When he returned, Thomas was reluctant to believe that his fellow disciples had seen Jesus and has, ever since, been stuck with the label, "doubting Thomas"!

A week later, Jesus came to the disciples again and, this time, Thomas was there and Jesus had special words for him, inviting Thomas to see and feel for himself that he was alive. Jesus then said something very important. He said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe".



Who might that be?

Well, of course, it could be us!

We have not physically seen Jesus, but we know in whom we believe and we are blessed for that.



A prayer for this week:

Father God, we thank you for the resurrection of Jesus.

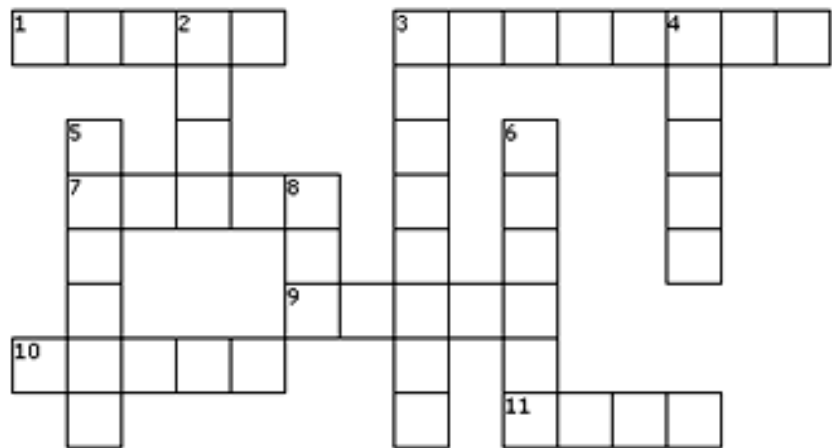
Thank you for loving us and blessing us. Help us to share that love and your blessings with others, this Eastertime and always. Amen.

"Stop doubting and believe!"

John 20:19-31 (NIV)



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ACROSS

1. To believe in something for which there is no proof
3. A follower of Jesus
7. The body parts at the end of the arms
9. A pointed and headed fastener designed to be pounded into wood
10. To be in a state of pleasure or delight
11. An entrance into a building or room

DOWN

2. One of two babies born at the same time
3. Unwilling to believe that something is true
4. Free from conflict; getting along with others; opposite of war
5. The disciple who would not believe without seeing
6. Not open
8. Breaking a religious or moral law

Words Used

door	sin	Thomas	nails
closed	hands	happy	disciple
peace	doubting	faith	twin



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Thomas

John 20:19-29