



SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Year A — 19th April 2020

The community of the Cathedral of St. Stephen acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which our parish stands.

*Embracing
Villa Maria Centre
and
St Patrick's
Fortitude Valley*



**Most Reverend
Mark Coleridge**

Archbishop of Brisbane

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*Jesus said,
"Peace be with you.
Doubt no longer but
believe."
Thomas replied,
"My Lord and my
God!"*

Readings for today: Acts 2:42-47; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31

Dear friends,

Good old Thomas takes centre-stage today, as he does every Second Sunday of Easter. Thomas is known as the "doubter" but that is unfair because he is, in reality, a true believer. In truth, most of us long for this experience of the verification of our faith.

There is a difference between scepticism and cynicism, even though the two tend to be confused these days. Scepticism is the inclination to examine with suspicion what is put before us, especially in regard to things that appear to be too good to be true. Cynicism is an attitude of distrust in any form of goodness or beauty or truth. Cynicism blocks off opportunities for growth or change or transformation. Too often in the modern world, faith is cynically dismissed as infantile and that it holds no place in the life of a modern rational person. But faith is not about naivety and blind-trust; nor is doubt an enemy of faith. Doubt is really a stepping-stone to becoming a "true believer".

The true enemy of faith is despair, a despair born of habitual cynicism. These are unsettling times and even people of the deepest faith can feel uneasy. Those who think otherwise, that our faith should be rock-solid in all circumstances, have never read, or understood the psalms.

One scripture scholar described the psalms as "the laboratory in which the people of Israel worked out their relationship with God". They are often raw and honest, and express every emotion under the sun from desolation to exultation. The psalms are the poetry of true faith. The psalms are the community standing before God and saying, "This is what is happening and this is what we are feeling." Sometimes the feeling is joy. At other times, it is longing and other times, sorrow. The psalms are always addressed to a "someone", to God, not an empty void. In these days, we can take the lead from Thomas and the psalmists and say, "This is what is happening and this is what I am are feeling." Then we can wait for God's response. *Fr. Anthony*



*Cathedral of
St. Stephen
249 Elizabeth St
Brisbane*



*St. Patrick's
58 Morgan St
Fortitude Valley*



*Villa Maria Chapel
171 St Pauls Tce
Spring Hill*

Cathedral Parish Mass Times this week

Monday to Friday: 8.00am & 12.30pm (*live-streamed*)
Saturday, 25 April 11.30am — ANZAC Day Mass (*live-streamed*)

Sunday

Cathedral of St Stephen
Saturday: *Suspended until further notice*
Sunday: 8.00am; 10.00am (*live-streamed*)

St Patrick's *Suspended until further notice*
Villa Maria *Suspended until further notice*

Reconciliation: **Monday to Friday** *Suspended until further notice*
Saturday

Exposition: *Suspended until further notice* **Benediction:** *Suspended until further notice*

Resurrection is Not an “Answer” but the Condition of Hope

One Easter night, Pope Francis told this short story:

“Yesterday I phoned a young man with a grave illness, an educated young man, an engineer, and while talking to him, to give him a sign of faith, I said: ‘There are no explanations for what is happening to you. Look at Jesus on the Cross. God did this to his Son, and there is no other explanation’. And he answered: ‘Yes, but He asked His Son and the Son said ‘yes’. I was not asked if I wanted this’. This moves us. None of us is asked: ‘Are you happy with what is happening in the world? Are you willing to carry this cross further?’”

Yes, we are not asked. There is no invitation to accept suffering.

We are simply born into this human condition, this beautiful yet flawed world.

From the moment we realise that this fleshy life is finite,
we live with the often unspoken fear of death.

We rebel against decay. Like Thomas, we doubt. We seek verification and assurance.
We cry out in vain, demanding answers to the random cruelty of this discordant cosmos.

Resurrection is not an answer – not in the ordinary sense of the word.

It is difficult to understand an answer
when the question is so visceral, ever-present and frightening.

We imagined that we lived in a world where everything was curable and manageable.
And now much to our shock and anxiety, we discover that we live in a different kind of world.

Whatever is fully claimed by the mighty word “resurrection”
remains beyond our mortal comprehension.

Instead, here and now, resurrection is a deep, instinctive, wordless intuition seeded within our soul.

Our awareness of this instinct is God’s promise, God’s gift, God’s stamp of ownership upon us.

God is, after all, a God of the living, not the dead.

Resurrection is the condition of hope which draws our longing beyond any horizon
which limits our view in this world.

We are not made for death and destruction,
nor for some slow fragmentation or dissolution of our human spirit.

We are made to be people who live in the hope and promise
that even the most final of stones will be rolled away.

Because of Jesus, there is no finality that can make any claim on us
and by some miracle, we somehow “know” this to be true.