

Prayer at Home

Second Sunday of Easter (Yr A)

Gather with family or on your own. Place an opened Bible on a table. Light a candle, white if possible, and place a crucifix and some flowers beside it and a bowl of water.

Begin with:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Introduction:

In this feast of new life, God calls us out of darkness into God's own marvellous light. Through this hearing of the Word, may we continue to live as a people of the resurrection.

Risen Lord, you are our resurrection and our life.

LORD, HAVE MERCY.

Paschal Lamb, you call us beyond doubt and into faith.

CHRIST, HAVE MERCY.

Lord of life, you give us the gift of your spirit.

LORD, HAVE MERCY.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,

we bless you,

we adore you,

we glorify you,

we give you thanks for your great glory,

Lord God, heavenly King,

O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

Opening Prayer

God of life,
Source of all faith,
Through the waters of baptism
You have raised us up in Jesus
And given us life that endures.

Day by day refine our faith,
That we who have not seen the Christ
May truly confess him as our Lord and God,
And share the blessedness of those who believe.

Through Jesus Christ, the Resurrection and the life, who lives and reigns
with you in unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. **Amen**

First Reading

Acts 2:42-47

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

The faithful lived together and owned everything in common.

The whole community remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.

The many miracles and signs worked through the apostles made a deep impression on everyone.

The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed.

They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**R. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
his love is everlasting.**

Let the sons of Israel say:
'His love has no end.'
Let the sons of Aaron say:
'His love has no end.'
Let those who fear the Lord say:
'His love has no end.' **R.**

I was thrust, thrust down and falling
but the Lord was my helper.
The Lord is my strength and my song;
he was my saviour.
There are shouts of joy and victory
in the tents of the just. **R.**

The stone which the builders rejected
has become the corner stone.
This is the work of the Lord,
a marvel in our eyes.
This day was made by the Lord;
we rejoice and are glad. **R.**

Second Reading

1 Peter 1:3-9

A reading from the first letter of St Peter
He has given us a new birth as his children, by raising Jesus Christ from the dead.

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy has given us a new birth as his sons, by raising Jesus Christ from the dead, so that we have a sure hope and the promise of an inheritance that can never be spoilt or soiled and never fade away, because it is being kept for you in the heavens. Through your faith, God's power will guard you until the salvation which had been prepared is revealed at the end of time. This is a cause of great joy for you, even though you may for a short time have to bear being plagued by all sorts of trials; so that, when Jesus Christ is revealed, your faith will have been tested and proved like gold - only it is more precious than gold, which is corruptible even though it bears testing by fire - and then you will have praise and glory and honour. You did not see him, yet you love him; and still without seeing him, you are already filled with a joy so glorious that it cannot be described, because you believe; and you are sure of the end to which your faith looks forward, that is, the salvation of your souls.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

John 20:29

Alleluia, alleluia!

You believe in me, Thomas, because you have seen me;
happy those who have not seen me, but still believe!

Alleluia!

Gospel

John 20:19-31 (JB)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

After eight days Jesus came in and stood among them.

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you,' and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you.

'As the Father sent me,
so am I sending you.'

After saying this he breathed on them and said:

'Receive the Holy Spirit.

For those whose sins you forgive,
they are forgiven;

for those whose sins you retain,
they are retained.'

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, 'We have seen the Lord,' he answered, 'Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into his side, I refuse to believe.' Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you,' he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.' Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him:

'You believe because you can see me,

Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.'

There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily

There is a difference between scepticism and cynicism, even though the two tend to be confused these days. Scepticism is the inclination to examine what is put before us; an habitual suspicion of 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 any 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; nor is doubt is about reducing everything to things that we can understand or verify.

As every honest believer knows, faith and doubt go hand in hand. Doubt is not an enemy of faith; doubt can often be the doorway that leads to a deeper faith. It is unfortunate that Thomas is often given the description of "doubting", because he is actually a firm believer, not just by the end of this story but throughout the whole of gospels. It is simply that his faith, like ours, needs to be fine-tuned by the events of life. Thomas is no sceptic.

Have you ever wondered where Thomas was on that first Sunday evening when Jesus appeared to his disciples? We don't know where he was, but we do know two things: firstly that the disciples were huddled together in a locked room because they were afraid, and secondly we know that Thomas was somewhere else. Was he being brave, out and about getting food or supplies? Was he involved in some desperate misguided search for the body of Jesus? Or had he simply given up hope that day and decided that there was no point in hanging around with the others? Whether brave, searching or disappointed, Thomas was outside the locked room – the only one of the disciples outside the locked room – and so he missed the opportunity to experience with the others the presence of the Risen Christ.

Ultimately, Thomas' dilemma is our dilemma. He just wants to get on with his life, but he doesn't want to base his life on shadows or a vague, elusive dream. Thomas wants to know.

Well none of us will ever know for sure, not in this life, not in a way that can be tested or proven. There are more ways to know things than by pure rationality. As human beings, we also have an instinctive way of knowing. Every parent knows this. Parents don't always need facts to know that something is happening for their children.

Human beings have deep instincts for the truth, something inside us, ultimately something unspoken and indescribable, that guides our way. In that sense, we are different from Thomas. Thomas' faith was based on what he could see and touch, ours is based on what we can't see and touch, but we sense is there nonetheless.

Thomas' faith was re-affirmed when he touched the wounds of the Risen Christ. For us, it is through our wounds and the wounds of the world, that we come to really know the presence of the Risen Christ. The irony is that, unlike Thomas, it is not us who touches wounds in order to believe. It is the opposite. We need to let the presence of the Risen Jesus touch what is wounded in us. When Christ touches our wounds and sorrows, we begin to believe in ourselves again. Once we have begun to experience healing for ourselves, we begin to bring healing and forgiveness to others.

Faith isn't about knowledge or information. Faith is about relationship. Our faith is challenged and re-arranged through all the events of our life. We don't have all the answers and we never will, but we can let our questions lead us to having a richer sense of things. Doubt is faith's companion. Thomas was brave enough to live with his questions – and he was faithful enough to discover some answers. Thomas doesn't doubt, he believes. May we be brave enough to do likewise.

Apostles Creed

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
At the words that follow, up to and including 'the Virgin Mary', all bow.
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.:

Prayers of Intercession

INTRODUCTION:

God calls us to respond in faith to the risen Lord. Let us bring our needs and those of the world before the God of all.

For the Church separated in this Easter season; that we might be inspired to be visible signs of Christ's presence, leading many to believe in the hope of the Resurrection. RISEN LORD, HEAR US.

For peace in this Easter Season; that Christ's words of peace to his disciples will calm our anxieties and fears. RISEN LORD, HEAR US.

For those who have difficulty believing or those who have lost their faith; that the deepest yearnings of their heart will lead them to God. RISEN LORD, HEAR US.

For our dispersed communities during this Easter Season; that we will discover a renewed sense of connection and communion with one another. RISEN LORD, HEAR US.

For those who suffer in mind or body during this Easter Season; that the Resurrected Christ, who bore the wounds of all humanity, may touch their lives with courage and hope. RISEN LORD, HEAR US.

For those who have died, especially those who die alone during this Easter Season; that they may come to know the joy of the Easter feast. RISEN LORD, HEAR US.

Almighty and all-merciful God,
lover of the human race, healer of all our wounds,
in whom there is no shadow of death,
save us in this time of crisis;
grant wisdom and courage to our leaders;
watch over all medical people
as they tend the sick and work for a cure;
stir in us a sense of solidarity beyond all isolation;
if our doors are closed, let our hearts be open.
By the power of your love destroy the virus of fear,
that hope may never die
and the light of Easter, the triumph of life,
may shine upon us and the whole world.
Through Jesus Christ, the Lord risen from the dead,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

***Holy Mary, health of the sick, pray for us.
St Joseph, guardian of us all, pray for us.***

Placing our faith in the power of the cross and trusting that we are united to all Christians, in all times and in all places, on this sacred day we dare to pray:

**Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
graciously grant peace in our days,
that, by the help of your mercy,
we may be always free from sin
and safe from all distress,
as we await the blessed hope
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

**For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are yours
now and for ever.**

Let us pray.

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that the peace and joy of this paschal season
may renew our minds and hearts.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Lord God,
Strength of the weary, medicine of the weak,
Be near to us as we call on you.
May you be our nourishment during this time
and renew us daily in your love.

May God bless us, keep us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.