



(Gospel Continued...)

‘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 the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand 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.

Reflection by Greg Sunter

Because the focus of this week’s gospel passage is usually placed on poor old doubting Thomas, we sometimes overlook the way the passage begins. The disciples are huddled in a room, ‘for fear of the Jews’. Just a couple of weeks earlier they had been on top of the world. Jesus was enormously popular with the people, and the disciples, by association, were caught up in that affection. Their man, the one they had chosen to follow, was making waves and stirring the authorities – thumbing his nose at the rules. This, of course, made the disciples feel good to be around Jesus. However, in the space of just a few short days, their world had turned upside down. They’d gone from riding the crest of a wave to being utterly dumped! They were cowering in a closed up room, afraid for their lives in case those who handed Jesus over for death came for them as well. They’d already had an experience of the resurrected Jesus yet they were still hiding and afraid. Into this fear and uncertainty steps Jesus who says, ‘Peace be with you’. It is a reminder of Jesus calming the storm out on the lake – in the midst of turmoil and anxiety he brings peace and calm.

Thomas has received a pretty bad rap for the last 2000 years, forever labelled as ‘Doubting Thomas’ because he wasn’t prepared to take someone else’s word for the fact that Jesus had risen. However, despite his demand for evidence, once Jesus is before him, he abandons all his thoughts about placing his fingers in the wounds and proclaims, ‘My Lord and my God!’ This is an absolutely extraordinary statement of faith. For the very first time, someone recognises Jesus, not as Messiah, prophet or Lord, but as God.

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Second Sunday of Easter, Year A

16 April 2023

First Reading Acts 2:42-47

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.

Responsorial Psalm Ps

117:2-4. 13-15. 22-24.

(R.) Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting. or
(R.) Alleluia.

1. 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.) 2. 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.) 3. 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.)

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Second Reading 1 Pt 1:3-9

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 spoiled 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 has been prepared is revealed at the end of time. This is a cause of great joy for you, even though you may for 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.

Gospel Acclamation Jn 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 Jn 20:19-31

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. (Continued on back)

LECTORS ROSTER: A new roster is being prepared for lectors for the months of May to September 2023. Could those who are currently on the roster please notify me if they are unavailable during that period or if there are any other changes required. Please contact the parish Details: 9758 1029 or email marymakarucha@stjohnthebaptist.net.au. Thank you to all our volunteers. - Mary Makarucha

PARISH OFFICE HOLIDAY CLOSURE The parish office will be closed from Mon 10th Apr - Fri 14th Apr. Easter blessings to all our Parishioners.

FRIENDSHIP GATHERING The group meets informally every Thursday, at 10am in the Parish Hall. Please drop in for a cuppa, a chat, or perhaps a game of cards. All welcome

CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUP in the Parish Hall from 10.15am Tuesdays, followed by a shared lunch. All welcome. On, the 11th April there will be no meeting owing to the Easter Break.

MOTHERS' PRAYER GROUP 9am-10am, in the Parish Office. There will be no Mother's Pray Meeting over the School Holiday Period.

ANNIVERSARIES: Pat Bathgate, Terry Potter, Pat Bathgate, Sinforoso Oracion, Leo Williamson, Giuseppe Lotrionte, Joseph Starrs, Linda Lawson.

FERNTREE GULLY VINNIES VOLUNTEERS NEEDED The SVDP shop, located at: Unit 7/1821 Ferntree Gully Rd, FTG, is in desperate need of more helpers. Please contact Diane on 9758 8501 if you are able to help out. BAYSWATER VINNIES,

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED The Bayswater SVDP shop is in urgent need of volunteers to assist them in the Op Shop. If you have a few spare hours, and would like to assist, please contact the Manager on 9729 6317. All help is gratefully accepted. PROJECT

PROJECT COMPASSION Please remember to bring your Project Compassion boxes and envelopes for collection as soon as possible. Thank you

The ANZAC DAY DAWN WATCH the Ferntree Gully Rotary Club invites our Parishioners and Friends, to join the ANZAC DAY Dawn Service, which will be held on Tuesday 25th April, 2023 at Quarry Park, Quarry Road, Ferntree Gully. Arrive at 5.45am, for a 6.00am start. Bring a torch and chair if needed.

DIVINE MERCY NOVENA & FEAST Sunday the 16th April, 2023 marks the Feast of Divine Mercy. Parishes across Victoria will be celebrating Divine Mercy Sunday on the first Sunday after Easter. Confessions will be available before Mass, and there will be recitation of the Holy Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet. Find out locations below. All welcome!

<https://melbournecatholic.org/uploads/vents/2023/divine-mercy-sunday-2-2/Divine-Mercy-Sunday-Victoria-Brochure.pdf>

On Sunday 2 April, hundreds of people, young and old, gathered on the steps of the State Library of Victoria for the 2023 **Walk for Justice for Refugees**, an event that is **held each year on Palm Sunday**. Walkers came from a wide range of faith backgrounds, community and service organisations, schools and higher education institutions, unions and councils, all showing support and solidarity for refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia. 'We all know that the fate of a refugee or emigrant is not easy, but ... very difficult and tragic,' said Bishop Mykola Bychok, Eparch for Ukrainian Catholics in Australia, New Zealand and Oceania, who was among the official speakers at the rally. Saving their lives, they are looking for a better fate for themselves, but they find humiliation, helplessness and sometimes the end of their lives outside their native land. A similar fate is common to many peoples, not only Ukrainian. It is frightening to think, but the Mediterranean Sea becomes a cemetery for about 10,000 refugees from poor African countries every year. With his homeland still suffering through a devastating war, Bishop Bychok spoke movingly of the 'fate of emigrants and refugees' among the Ukrainian people.

'For more than 130 years, a large number of our people have emigrated to Brazil and Argentina, then to Canada and the USA, and after the Second World War to Australia and the countries of Western Europe,' he said. Today, 'in just one year of the terrible war, 16 million people left their homes: 8 million internally displaced persons and 8 million displaced around the world.'

He called for prayers and support for those from Ukraine and from places like 'Iran, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Syria and Ethiopia, who left their homes due to war or political persecution. Let us remember that the first refugee was Jesus Christ, who was persecuted by King Herod. His parents, the Holy Mother of God and St Joseph, fled from Bethlehem to Egypt to save his life. May the same Lord bless and help all refugees in Australia and around the world.'