

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

YEAR A

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

O God,
you want the whole world
to believe in you
and in Jesus, who you sent
to save us.
Show us how to believe,
and teach us
what we should believe.
Though people may laugh
at us for believing,
give us courage
to stand up for you
and to live as we should.
We ask this through
Jesus Christ, our Lord.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

Both of our readings focus on the presence of the risen Lord. In the first reading, this presence is witnessed in the actions of the disciples—their life together in community, their miracles, their teaching, and their belief in the Resurrection. This witness led more and more men and women to believe.

Jesus' first words to his disciples are of peace and forgiveness. "Peace be with you; . . . if you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven." Thomas represents those of us who find it hard to believe that Christ is truly present among us and that living in peace and unity is possible. To him, Jesus says, "Do not doubt, but believe." The Gospel focuses on the faith of those who have not seen the body of Jesus. Christ is "Lord and God" for those who see, not physically, but with faith!

FIRST READING: Acts 2:42-47

This is a reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Those who believed in Jesus
lived together in a community
and shared everything they had.
They listened to the teaching of the apostles
and prayed together.
And they were filled with wonder
because of the many signs and miracles
of the apostles.
Every day they went to the temple to pray,
and in their homes they broke bread
and ate together
with joy and thanksgiving in their hearts.
All the people liked the way the disciples lived,
and many others came to believe in Jesus
and be saved.

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE: Psalm 118

RESPONSE:

This day was made by the Lord, let us re-joice,
let us be glad! let us re-joice in sal-va-tion!

VERSE: Leader

You are my strength and my Sav-ior. You have giv-en me
life. You have giv-en me life. I will pro-claim the won-ders you do!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

"We have seen the ris-en Lord!" Al-le-lu-ia!
"I be-lieve my Lord and my God!" Al-le-lu-ia!

GOSPEL: John 20:19-31

This is a reading from the Gospel of John.

On Sunday evening, the same day the women
had been to the tomb of Jesus,
the disciples were gathered in a room upstairs.
They had locked the doors
because they were afraid of the people
who had crucified Jesus.

Then Jesus came and stood in the room and said,
"Peace be with you!"

He showed them his hands and his side.
The disciples were filled with joy
when they saw the Lord. Jesus said again,
"Peace be with you!"

Then he breathed on the disciples and said to them,

"Receive the Holy Spirit.
If you forgive the sins of anyone,
they are forgiven.
If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Now Thomas was not there with the other disciples
when Jesus came. So, later they told him,

"We have seen the Lord!"

But Thomas said,

"I'll never believe it until I see the marks
made by the nails in his hands
and touch the wound in his side."

One week later,
the disciples were in the same room again.
This time, Thomas was with them.
Even though the doors were locked,
Jesus came in and stood among them. He said,

"Peace be with you."

Then he said to Thomas,

"Here, touch the marks on my hands
and feel the wound in my side.
Doubt no longer, but believe."

Thomas said to Jesus,

"My Lord and my God!"

Then Jesus said to Thomas,

"You believe now because you see me.
How blessed are people who have not seen me
and still believe!"

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

Like the Passion, the theology of
the Resurrection is difficult to
discuss with children. Let the text
speak for itself.

After the first reading, ask the
children to recall how the first
Christians lived and what they did.
Ask them why the Christians lived
that way. How did it show they
believed in Jesus?

After the Gospel, ask the children
what they heard:

- Where were the apostles? Why?
- Wasn't it normal that they should be there?
- What did Jesus say when he came in? Why?
- Which disciple was not there?
- What did he say when the others told him about Jesus?
- Wasn't that a normal way to react?
- What happened one week later?
- What did Jesus say again to the disciples?
- What did he say to Thomas?
- What did Thomas call Jesus?

Help the children to understand
that when Jesus said, "those who
have not seen," he meant, "seen my
body." Help them understand, also,
that it is truly difficult to believe in
things we haven't seen. Often we
come to believe because someone in
whom we trust tells us. For example,
we believe some food is good for us
because our parents tell us so. (You
might provide other examples.) In
the same way, people come to believe
in Jesus by what we say and do; they
see Jesus in our lives.