

READINGS, REFLECTION AND PRAYERS FOR 2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER

FROM USCCB.ORG/2ND EASTER

A READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone,
and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

All who believed were together and had all things in common;
they would sell their property and possessions
and divide them among all according to each one's need.

Every day they devoted themselves
to meeting together in the temple area
and to breaking bread in their homes.

They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart,
praising God and enjoying favour with all the people.
And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 118: 2-4; 13-15; 22-24

RESPONSE: Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, his love is everlasting.

Let the house of Israel say, "His mercy endures forever."
Let the house of Aaron say, "His mercy endures forever."
Let those who fear the LORD say, "His mercy endures forever."

I was hard pressed and was falling, but the LORD helped me.
My strength and my courage is the LORD, and he has been my saviour.
The joyful shout of victory in the tents of the just:

The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.
By the LORD has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes.
This is the day the LORD has made; let us be glad and rejoice in it.

SECOND READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF ST PETER 1:3-9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading,
kept in heaven for you.

By the power of God, you are safeguarded through faith,
to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time.

In this you rejoice, although now for a little while
you may have to suffer through various trials,
so that the genuineness of your faith,
more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire,
may prove to be for praise, glory, and honour
at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
Although you have not seen him, you love him.
Even though you do not see him, now yet you believe in him.

<p>You believe in me, Thomas, because you have seen me; Happy those who have not seen me, but still believe!</p>
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A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN 20:19-31

On the evening of that first day of the week,
when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews,
Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."
When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.
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.
Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them,
and whose sins you retain are retained."

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve was not with them when Jesus came.
So the other disciples said to 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 into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

Now a week later, his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you."

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book.

These are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

REFLECTION – adapted from Patricia Stevenson RSJ.

<https://www.sosj.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Easter-SecondSunday-YearA.pdf>

The coronavirus environment has "scattered" us. It is a trial for us not to be able to meet to draw on all we have in common, especially the strength and unity we share as brothers and sisters in Christ Risen whose light and life is for all.

The disciples preached that all peoples were the beloved of God without distinction of their race, gender or economic position. Yet, unity in Christ is still a goal for us. Christians, throughout history and variously as can happen today, have thrown up boundaries, causing divisions and even violence in the false claim that one cultural expression of the Gospel is better than another.

Acts reminds us of the essentials of Christian living, our measuring tape.

The first essential named is the apostles' instruction. We call this as our education in faith. We cannot live as vibrant Christians, colouring the world, if our knowledge of the Scriptures and tradition is stuck in the time zone of our First Communion or Confirmation. Vatican II called us to make adult education a priority.

The second essential is the common life. Let's think and act communally. Since the beginning, Christians have worked to better world conditions - through education, health and science. A Christian community with no outreach can hardly be called Christian. Everyone Jesus met was kin for him. For us the same applies, our neighbours' concerns are our concerns. Our stance needs to be - hospitality to all.

The third essential is the “breaking of the bread”. For Vatican II, Eucharist is the source and summit of our lives. From this wellspring, we can draw the water of life. From its unfathomable depths and breadth of application to life, our view of the world can be transformed. We gather as many but as one people; we listen seeking God’s ways which may not be our ways; we are challenged for it may cost us to be broken and to be poured out in service of others; thanksgiving to and praise of God is our purpose and shapes us.

The fourth essential is prayer. Originally the disciples attended the temple for the set hours of prayer but the Eucharist was celebrated at home. We may speak of our spirituality rather than our prayer life. Spirituality embraces all that makes us human. Our spirituality is first and foremost Christian spirituality. The colours of our homelands, family origins, cultures, denominations and communities infuse our spiritualities - Christian spirituality is extraordinarily diverse and rich.

This passage from Acts tells us that the community ate together and shared resources. As God sent his Son, so the Son sends us - to bring this healing message of peace to the world. Christianity informs how we live for the health and happiness of the whole world.

Amid suffering in our society and so widespread through the world today,
may the grace of Easter allow the Church to shine with new beauty
- strong in faith, compassionate, practical and joyful in charity, and tenacious in hope -
leading all to their own encounters with the Risen and living Lord.

May the dazzling light of Easter clarify the choices of all who hold public office
- free from all compromise with evil and dedicated to building a civilization of love.

May the richness of Easter gifts empower the poor and the powerless
with pathways which free them from poverty and anguish.

May the new life that springs from Easter reach all the baptised.
Nourished by the Word and Eucharist, learning, shared life and prayer,
may they grow in their desire and taste for holiness.

May the Easter victory over evil and death console the sick, the dying, and their carers.
May our support for them comfort them in their needs
and encourage them in their witness to God’s presence in our lives.