

Homily. 2nd Sunday of Easter. Year B. 6/7 April 2024.

Thank you for what turned out to be a wonderful Holy Week and Easter in our community. This brings us to where we are today, the 50 days of the Easter Season, marked by celebration and our hope in the Risen Lord. There is an immediate lesson for us in this time; that the 40 Lenten days of our repentance and conversion are now overtaken by these longer and richer Easter days of mercy and renewal. As scripture says, wherever sin and sorrow abounds, God's grace and forgiveness abounds even more in Jesus Christ, this Easter Time of abundance.

The first reading told us about the early Church after Pentecost, a friendly community of respect and generosity working harmoniously together, celebrating the Lord's love and bringing his Good News to others. Then, the second reading from the 1st Letter of St. John affirmed that we are indeed loved by God and that by our faith in the Lord we have already overcome all of the dark and desperate powers active in the world.

Lastly, and as it is every year, John's Gospel takes us back to the evening of the first Resurrection day and then on to the following Sunday, which for us is now. We see the disciples having a hard time coming to grips with the news that they've been told of Jesus resurrection. They're still huddled together fearfully in a room somewhere in Jerusalem, doors locked tight. Into this room Jesus appears, real, mortally wounded and yet very alive. His message and gift is one of peace and courage casting out failure and fear. He gave them his own Spirit, the breath and life-force of God, telling them that they had a job to do, a mission to accomplish, bringing the forgiveness of his death and resurrection to all.

Thomas the Twin wasn't there, who knows where he was? Out shopping, visiting friends, hiding somewhere else? Either way, when he came back to the group they told him what had happened. I sense that he was a bit miffed that he'd missed out, insisting that he wouldn't be satisfied until he'd seen and heard for himself. For this, he had a whole week to wait, until Jesus next appearance on this 2nd Easter Sunday. Then, totally convinced, Thomas believed in the deepest possible way, acknowledging Jesus as both the Lord of his life and his God forever.

It takes time, perhaps a life time to overcome our fears, allowing them to be washed away by the peace and hope of resurrection truth and faith. This was the disciples story and now it's ours. We have been born into the new age inaugurated by Christ, the age of Resurrection. The world of the past has gone, overcome by God's grace and accepted as such by our faith. The Holy Spirit rules this time in as far as we let the Holy Spirit grow within us, guiding our lives, day after day.

This is what these Easter Time weeks are about; that by witness and word, sacraments and practice, God kindles aflame our faith so that we can learn afresh that Jesus is risen indeed, that we are his sisters and brothers and Church, that his Spirit and commission lives in us and that we have are here to bring his forgiveness and kindness to others. For as once fear and sin abounded trapping us, so now but even more so does peace and grace triumph victoriously in the freedom of our faith.