

Homily. 2nd Sunday of Easter. Year. A. 15/16 April 2023.

There's no question that the Lord Jesus manifested himself to some individuals after his resurrection. We can think of Mary Magdalene and some other women who were with her on Easter morning, and also of Simon Peter. There were a few others, too, who personally experienced the Risen Lord. That being said, most people met the resurrected Christ not alone, but in the company of other followers of the Jesus way.

There were 2 journeying together on the road to Emmaus when Jesus turned up and walked beside them, as there were various groups of disciples gathered when Jesus made himself known to them in the time after his resurrection. This was certainly the case in the story we've just heard today. Such group appearances of Christ risen helped dispel any notion about individuals being deluded about what they saw and heard. It also strengthened the importance of the community of faith as the primary means and place for our encounter with Jesus raised from the dead.

St. John says that the core group of disciples, along with some others, were gathered together that first Easter evening, supporting each other as they tried to work out the meaning of the strange and stunning stories they'd been told by Mary Magdalene, the other women witnesses and Peter, saying that they'd encountered Jesus risen, just as he'd promised. On that 1st Easter night so full of fears Jesus came to all who were meeting together in that place. Their thoughts and feelings swung, from shock and disbelief, through mental confusion and anxiety, to joy, hope and the peaceful acceptance of the truth, the peace that Christ offers.

Now, Thomas wasn't with them for reasons that we aren't told and what a blessing that turned out to be. It was a week later, the 2nd Sunday in our never ending Easter life, that Jesus again manifested himself to the group, this time with Thomas in attendance. Sunday, Resurrection day, is our Lord's chosen day, as it has continued to be for us ever since. After visible proof of Jesus new life, all doubts sent packing, Thomas affirmed his faith in the resurrection of the Christ as his Lord and his God.

Lastly, John's gospel turns its attention to you and to me, the many people who, unlike Thomas and companions, have not seen, yet believe. We've come to our belief through the witness of Jesus disciples. I mean by this our parents and families, our schools and parish communities, our friends and teachers, our reading of the scriptures and worship, our prayer and study, our questions, relationships and experiences. These things, all of them and more, are the resurrection manifestations of the Lord to us. In its widest, most catholic, all embracing sense, all of this is the Church open to and working under the Holy Spirit's inspiration and command, telling the world of the good-news down through the ages.

This is our story of coming to faith, our blessing as Christ said. Helped by our Sunday resurrection community gathered here, we are called to pass on this blessing, paying forward the grace of mercy and hope that we've heard, felt and made our own as the Lord's sisters and brothers. Thomas went on to evangelise India, becoming their patron Saint. Our 'India' is here with us now. It also lies just outside these walls and doors, the church of the world we inhabit, must serve and give our faith witness too, day by day, with the Lord, his Spirit and each other always by our side.