

Reading 1

[Acts 4:32-35](#)

The community of believers was of one heart and mind,
and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own,
but they had everything in common.
With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all.
There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them,
bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need.

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24](#)

R. (1) 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 savior.
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.

Merry Christmas!

What an odd thing to say at Easter time, but it is sincerely meant.
Our scriptures today remind me of a fest of gift giving. It is by the Nativity and through the cross that we come to understand gift.
Our culture understands gifting through things: Christmas presents, Easter baskets and such.

But the Spirit speaks to us today of the giving of self.

The early Church shared to the extent that they were seen to be of one heart and one mind.

What level of selfless giving would that entail? Have you ever seen such a community, one where you could feel the presence of one heart, one mind? What did it look like? More properly **who** did that look like?

Our responsorial Psalm says **“By the Lord this has been done.”** So what is our response to the Lord’s loving gift? It is nothing less than our own gift of love and obedience. **This is the love and obedience in which nothing is withheld just as Christ withheld nothing from us and the Father.**

Our obedience and love are to enter into Christ’s obedience and love. That is **how** we are transformed into a people of one heart and one mind. We receive the grace to truly give like Jesus gives.

Reading II

[1 Jn 5:1-6](#)

Beloved:

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten by God,
and everyone who loves the Father loves also the one begotten by him.
In this way we know that we love the children of God
when we love God and obey his commandments.
For the love of God is this,
that we keep his commandments.
And his commandments are not burdensome,
for whoever is begotten by God conquers the world.
And the victory that conquers the world is our faith.
Who indeed is the victor over the world
but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

This is the one who came through water and blood,
Jesus Christ,
not by water alone, but by water and blood.
The Spirit is the one that testifies,
and the Spirit is truth.

Gospel

[Jn 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."
And 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."

This is the grace and peace that Jesus brought to a group of terrified men hiding in a locked room. After encountering the risen Jesus, they witnessed to a doubting Thomas that they had seen the Lord. Can we guess that by "seeing" the Lord that the Spirit had given them the grace to see and understand more than just the physical?

Whomever they encountered had transformed this cowering bunch of nobodies into a community of one heart and one mind. Many of this same group would boldly proclaim their faith in martyrdom as they gave as they had received.

As we here are all currently works in progress, it is daunting to think we could ever aspire to the holiness of the martyrs. How could we ever give fully, believe completely? We doubt that we could ever experience the presence of Christ, the grace that could loosen our grasps on our own personal desires.

Fear not. "Peace be with you."
Grace is distributed to each according to their need. Jesus did not reject doubting Thomas. Jesus beheld Thomas, then Thomas beheld the one the others had seen—the risen Christ.

This is the day the Lord has made.
Let us be glad and rejoice in it.

Merry Christmas. God gave us his love. May you have mine and share each other's love.

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 nailmarks
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.
But these are written 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.

Theme:

But the Spirit speaks to us today of the giving of self.

Acts:

The early Church shared to the extent that they were seen to be of one heart and one mind.

Psalms:

“By the Lord this has been done.”

1 John:

. This is the love and obedience in which nothing is withheld just as Christ withheld nothing from us and the Father.

John

Jesus beheld Thomas, then Thomas beheld the one the others had seen—the risen Christ.