

***ctkAlive!* Scripture Study**
Easter Season 2020—A Cycle Readings
Session 2—Jesus Shows Thomas his Wound Marks



“The Incredulity of Thomas”
Michelangelo Merisi da [Caravaggio](#) (1601-1602)

Note: *For your convenience and to broaden your benefit from this and all sessions in this series, we have added [links](#) to books and authors mentioned. Caution: Links to the internet are like rabbits dashing across a hunter’s path. Instinct says, “Leave the reflection and chase after that link!” Instead, we suggest waiting until you have followed the entire reflection. Then take all the time you wish to follow these interesting and educational links.*

Introduction

We are now into our Catholic community’s Easter Season liturgies! No need to ask anyone, “How did you spend your Lent?” A massive communal “fasting” descended upon all of us. I have a personal practice of not “giving up” anything for Lent. Instead, I ask the Lord to let Lent find *me*. It never fails to do just that—this year in a wholly unexpected, communal way.

Thank you Frs. Paulson and Brian for bringing the solemn liturgies into our homes. “Christ is Risen,” indeed!

Somehow, we must set our minds to what lies ahead for us, our families, our parish, and our local and worldwide communities. We’ll need to liberate our minds and hearts from the “tomb” of sudden and shocking restriction on our freedom of movement. Let’s start looking forward to the end of the current health crisis and how we as individuals and as a faith community might work to rebuild—improve—our relationships with families and church communities, then our national and worldwide communities.

Al Garrotto

Opening Prayer (slowly . . . follow the pause marks (/ //).

Source: Catholic Online (*adapted* for use in this meditation)
<https://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=640>

Your beloved son is risen from the grave, Alleluia.
He who hung upon the Cross for us, Alleluia.

Let us pray.
Loving Father,
through your only-begotten Son, you overcame death on this day
and opened to us the welcoming door to everlasting life.
Help us bring to reality the good resolves you have inspired in us
and, by your constant help, make them lastingly effective.
We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns forever and ever.
Amen.
Alleluia, Alleluia.

Overview of the Easter Theme

"What Does 'Risen' Really Mean?" by [Father Brian Joyce](#) (from his Easter Season homily of April 24, 2004, at Christ the King)

"It seems to me that there are four basic things about what we believe and celebrate that go back to the [*the first Easter*] and have continued all along.

"The *first* thing is the insistence of the early Church, the early disciples, and the four gospels that the tomb was empty.

"The *second* thing, the personal experience that Jesus the Lord is alive.

"The *third*, and this is what is new, that he can be encountered still—in different ways. This Jesus can be encountered in a community of faith, and when we hear his story in words [*the four gospels*], can be encountered in the poor, and most of all . . . in the Eucharist.

"And the *fourth* thing, and the most telling, is that this is not just someone back from the dead [*like Lazarus*], but that a whole new age has begun, not just for him, but for us. It affects us all. It affects the course of history. It affects the direction of the universe."

Fr. Brian offered us both the *personal* meaning of Easter and the resurrection's *mystical, cosmic* meaning. *Take a moment to reread Fr. Brian's four basic realities of Easter.*

— *With which “basic” understandings about the Easter mystery am I most conscious (and why)?*

— *Which of the four basic truths of Easter is most difficult for me to wrap my head around (and why)?*

First Reading: From the Acts of the Apostles (2: 42-47)

(Here we have a description of the first gatherings of the newborn “Jesus Movement” within Judaism.)

“They were faithful to the teaching of the apostles, the common life of sharing, the breaking of bread and the prayers. A holy fear came upon all the people, for many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

“All the believers lived together and shared all their belongings. They would sell their property, and all they had, and distribute the proceeds to others, according to their need.

“Each day, they met together, in the temple area; they broke bread in their homes; they shared their food with great joy and simplicity of heart; they praised God and won the people’s favor.

“And every day, the Lord added to their number, those who were being saved.”

Personal Reflection

St. Luke authored the Acts of the Apostles as the second volume of the story of the life of Jesus and the growth of early Christian communities across Asia Minor and Southeastern Europe.

— *How do my personal life and the life of my local parish community retain the qualities of the first communities Luke is describing? What might I and my parish do better in following the model of the first Christians.*

We can also use this passage of Acts as a “score card” by which Christians and their local communities can gauge their fidelity to the mission entrusted to us by the Risen Christ.

— *Using Luke’s five “markers” in Acts 2, how well am I doing at growing my personal faith and actively participating in my parish community’s faith life? (Try not to simply answer “fine.” Give this some real thought.)*

Antiphonal Psalm 118: 2-4, 13-15, 22-24)

A processional song of praise.

Let Israel say, “His loving kindness endures forever.”

Let the house of Aaron say, "His loving kindness endures forever."
Let those who fear Yahweh say, "His loving kindness endures forever."

I was pushed hard and about to fall, but Yahweh came to my help.
Yahweh is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.
Joyful shouts of victory are heard in the tents of the just:

"The right hand of Yahweh strikes mightily.
The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone.
This was Yahweh's doing, and we marvel at it.
This is the day Yahweh has made; so let us rejoice and be glad."

Personal Reflection

*To the psalm's first three lines, can I add my own affirmation today? Try this:
Let ___(my name)___ say: "His loving kindness endures forever."*

— *How easily do those words flow from my heart, considering the new restrictions on my freedom of movement and (perhaps) my family's threatened financial security?*

In the second stanza, the psalmist does not say, "All is right with the world, hurray!"
Rather the message in Psalm 118 is both personal and communal: "His loving kindness endures forever."

— *Are "joyful shouts of victory" heard in my tent (my home)—even as we are still surrounded by an invisible invader that threatens my health and wellbeing and that of my loved ones? When am I at my weakest in the "joyful shouts" department?*

In the third stanza, the challenge for me during the current crisis is:
"This is the day Yahweh has made; so let us rejoice and be glad."

— How hard is it to say these words and *really mean them*?

Second Reading: From the First Letter of St. Peter (1: 3-9)

The following is from the [Introduction](#) to the Letters of Peter in the [online edition](#) of Catholic Pastoral Bible:

"This is an important passage in Peter's first letter, not only because of what it says but also because it gives us a glimpse of the Church of the apostles. It has many points of contact with the letters of James and Paul, especially with Paul's epistle to the Romans."

“Let us praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for his great mercy. In raising Jesus Christ from the dead, he has given us new life and a living hope. The inheritance that does not corrupt, nor goes bad, nor passes away, was reserved for you, in heaven, since God’s power shall keep you faithful until salvation is revealed, in the last days.

“There is cause for joy, then, even though you may, for a time, have to suffer many trials. Thus will your faith be tested, like gold in a furnace. Gold, however, passes away, but faith, worth so much more, will bring you in the end praise, glory and honor, when Jesus Christ appears. You have not, yet, seen him, and, yet, you love him; even without seeing him, you believe in him, and experience a heavenly joy beyond all words, for you are reaching the goal of your faith: the salvation of your souls.”

Personal Reflection

Peter offers nothing concrete on which to base my faith—or his! He admits that the conviction of faith is based on “not seeing.” Yet, one of our favorite sayings is “seeing is believing.”

— *Without proof to support my decision, how do I account for my living hope and belief that Jesus is my Lord and Savior?*

“Even though you may, for a time, have to suffer many trials. Thus will your faith be tested, like gold in a furnace.” We are tempted to skip over the first part of this passage and get to the ‘good part’: “Faith, worth so much more, will bring you, in the end, praise, glory and honor, when Jesus Christ appears.”

— *Why do I believe in a loving God despite the trials of my daily life, when nothing seems “normal,” and we cannot predict what our new individual and social “normal” will look like, after the current health crisis finally ends—if it ends?*

Gospel Proclamation from St. John (20: 19-31)

These are the final words of John’s gospel.

On the evening of that day, the first day after the Sabbath, the doors were locked where the disciples were, because of their fear of the Jews. But Jesus came, and stood among them, and said to them, “Peace be with you!” Then he showed them his hands and his side.

The disciples, seeing the Lord, were full of joy.

Again Jesus said to them, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” After saying this, he breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit! Those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; those whose sins you retain, they are retained.”

Thomas, the Twin, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord."

But he replied, "Until I have seen in his hands the print of the nails and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

Eight days later, the disciples were again inside the house and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; stretch out your hand, and put it into my side. Do not continue in your unbelief but believe!"

Thomas said, "You are my Lord and my God."

Jesus replied, "You believe because you see me, don't you? Happy are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

There were many other signs that Jesus gave in the presence of his disciples, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded, so you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Believe and you will have life through his name!

Personal Reflection

For every funeral Mass at which Fr. Brian Joyce presided, he read and homilized on another passage from John's gospel about Thomas the Apostle (14: 1-7):

"Do not be troubled! Trust in God and trust in me! In my Father's house there are many rooms; otherwise, I would not have told you that I go to prepare a place for you. After I have gone and prepared a place for you, I shall come again and take you to me, so that where I am, you also may be. Yet, you know the way where I am going."

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going; how can we know the way?"

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me. If you know me, you will know the Father also; indeed you know him, and you have seen him."

A week after Jesus' resurrection, Thomas seems to have "lost his way" for the second time.

- Was it envy at not being present the first time Jesus appeared to the other "ten" apostles?
- Was Thomas feeling left out of the most important event of his life?
- How could the Risen Christ be so inconsiderate of his worth and feelings?

We can't be sure about any of the above questions.

In this week's gospel passage, Jesus makes a special point of going straight to Thomas to assuage whatever feelings he harbored. He says: "Put your finger here, and see my hands; stretch out your hand, and put it into my side. Do not continue in your unbelief but believe!"

The term “doubting Thomas” has cemented itself in our Catholic culture.

— *How do I see myself in the reluctant apostle? How strong is my need for proof before giving assent to something new that is said or shown to me? How is this attitude good for me? How might it at times be not so good?*

— *As a declared “person of faith,” how far am I willing to go in trusting the Risen Christ to love me, guide my decisions, care for my needs and those of my family, etc.?*

Journaling Prompts

Take some time to write about the insights you’ve gained from reflecting on the 2nd Sunday of Easter readings.

— *What is the first thought that comes to mind?*

— *How have these readings and reflections made a difference in how I will go forward in life?*

— *Where is my outside limit of trust in God’s love for me—that point beyond which I cannot yet go? What would I hope to change in order to solidify my faith?*

Questions

Feel free to send any questions or comments you have to ctkAlive@ctkph.org
The moderator will respond in a timely manner.

Preview of Next Session: 3rd Sunday of Easter Season

Acts 2: 14-33 (Peter said . . . “Fellow Jews and all foreigners now staying in Jerusalem, listen to what I have to say about Jesus of Nazareth.”)

1 Peter 1: 17-21 (“You call upon a Father who makes no distinctions between persons but judges according to each one’s need.”)

Luke 24: 13-35 (After Jesus death and the Sabbath observation, two of Jesus’ disciples were fleeing Jerusalem on the road to their homes in Emmaus. The unrecognized Risen Jesus met up with them. He said : “What are you talking about?’ Cleophus answered ‘It seems you are the only traveler to Jerusalem who doesn’t know what has happened there these past few days.’”)

Recommended Reading:

Forgiving Day by Day: Practicing God's Ways in Our Relationships by Judith Ingram

(A book of daily reflections and prayers. In simple language, studded with biblical quotes and references, my dear friend and fellow author Judith Ingram tackles the need to forgive—and reconcile, if possible, with those who have harmed us some way, physically, emotionally, or spiritually. This is one beautiful but, like all of us, damaged soul offering the tried and truest spiritual medicine for healing past wrongs—the ability to first forgive then to seek reconciliation, if possible. These short, daily readings are not time-demanding, but their payoff is a curative call to allow divine grace to heal the reader.)

For Viewing

[40—The Temptation of Christ](#)

A new feature film directed by Douglas James Vail, with the boy Jesus being played by [Mateo Rey](#). Until very recently Mateo and his parents, Christopher and Sarah Garcia were CTK parishioners. The film was set to be released in theaters this week. Instead it will be available this during this Easter Season on many streaming channels (including Amazon Prime and iTunes). We had a private showing here at CTK last summer. The film is very good. Watch it if you can.)

Closing Prayer

Adapted for use here.

Original source: Catholic Online

<https://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=640>

This is the day the Lord has made, Alleluia.

Let us be glad and rejoice in it, Alleluia.

To God the Father let us sing, to God the Son, our Risen King.

Let us equally adore the Spirit, God forever more, Alleluia.

Praise Jesus our Lord, for he is good.

Sing praise to our Lord, for he is gracious.

It is fitting to praise him.

Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving.

Sing praise with the harp to our God, who covers the heavens with clouds
and provides rain for the earth;

Who makes grain sprout on the mountains and herbs for the service
of women and men;

Who gives food to the cattle, and to young ravens when they cry out.

In the strength of the warhorse he delights not.

The Lord is pleased with those who fear Him, and with those who hope
for His kindness.

The Sunday readings are from
[*Christian Community Bible: Catholic Pastoral Edition*](#)
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Commentaries © [Alfred J. Garrotto](#)
Bishop Myriel: In His Own Words (a novel)
(follow the above link)