

## Here's a text if you've only a minute ...

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love has no end. *Psalm*

You did not see him, yet you loved him; and still without seeing him, you are already filled with a joy so glorious that it cannot be described.

*Second Reading*

'Peace be with you.'

*Gospel*

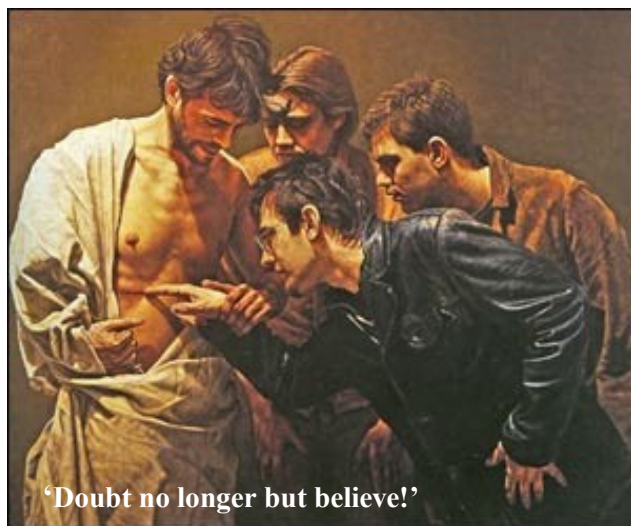
Heavenly Father and God of mercy,  
we no longer look for Jesus among the dead,  
for he is alive and has become the Lord of life.  
From the waters of death you raise us with him  
and renew your gift of life within us.

Increase in our minds and hearts  
the risen life we share with Christ  
and help us to grow as your people  
towards the fullness of eternal life with you.

*Old Opening Prayer*

This week's readings:

Acts 2: 42–47; Psalm 117 (118); 1 Peter 1: 3–9; John 20: 19–31



'Doubt no longer but believe!'

John Granville Gregory, *Still doubting*  
(Bangor Cathedral, N. Wales)

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday)  
Year A, 19th April 2020

His love has no end!

At the heart of today's Easter liturgy, we witness God's unending love and mercy at work in the midst of very human doubt and weakness.

In the **Gospel**, the risen Christ appears amongst the disciples in their hiding place. Blessed with the Holy Spirit, they are sent out to spread Christ's message of love, forgiveness and peace. Thomas is not with them and cannot believe what they tell him, but eight days later, Jesus returns and the reality of resurrection is revealed to Thomas in a personal way.

The **Second Reading** reminds us that the resurrection has reclaimed our birth-right as children of God. We are encouraged to be mindful and joyful at this reality. This changes us and everything forever. Even in the trials and anxieties of the times we are living through, faith will always be enough.

The **First Reading** shows how the Early Church, filled with the Spirit of the risen Christ, lived out its faith. Its members are united in the breaking of bread, communal prayer, a spirit of shared generosity, and in compassionate acts of love. This is the life we are called to live too, even as today we face the challenge of maintaining our bonds of fellowship when we can no longer safely gather as a community. Christ is with us totally in the suffering of our longing to be together again.

United with Christians everywhere, and against a tide of doubt and scepticism, our faith-filled actions, expressed in small acts of kindness will declare with the **Psalmist**: 'His love has no end'.

At one with the Easter spirit of the Early Church, let's pray for each other, and especially for those facing trials because of their health or isolation. May we remain joyful in the certain knowledge of God's great mercy that has made us his children.

### Opening Prayer

God of everlasting mercy, who in the very recurrence of the paschal feast  
kindle the faith of the people you have made your own,  
increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed,  
that all may grasp and rightly understand  
in what font they have been washed,  
by whose Spirit they have been reborn,  
by whose Blood they have been redeemed.

### First Reading Acts 2: 42–47

The whole community remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.

The many miracles and signs worked through the apostles made a deep impression on everyone.

The faithful all lived together, and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed.

They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved.

I come to my place of prayer and slowly allow myself to become still.

I reverently read this passage from Acts, noticing where my spirit is drawn.

As I read again, I try to imagine the very early days of the church as described here.

What do I see? How does it make me feel?

I wonder what it must have felt like to be part of such a close, warm and generous community.

Why did they choose to live like this?

Would I be able to make the same choices?

Where do I see people living out and expressing their faith like this today, especially during the present health emergency?

Taking time to ponder these questions, I then talk to the risen Christ about how this has made me feel.

I take time to listen to Christ speaking to me.

Whatever I hear, whatever I notice, I let this settle within me with gratitude.

I close my prayer by making my own act of commitment to try as best I can to make choices in my life that will help to deepen God's love in my life.

*Glory be to the Father...*

### Gospel John 20: 19–31

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you,' and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.' After saying this he breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.'

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, 'We have seen the Lord,' he answered, 'Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe'. Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you', he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand: put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.' Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God'. Jesus said to him: 'You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.'

There are many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name.

I read the Gospel slowly. Using my imagination I enter into the scene, standing with the disciples in the upper room, cut off and isolated as many are just now. What is the mood of the gathering?

I wonder ... what are they afraid of?

What are my own fears at this time of global crisis?

How do I feel when I listen to yet more alarming statistics on the news?

I imagine Jesus suddenly being present, standing alongside me ... looking deeply into my being; knowing, loving and accepting me just as I am. Even in my doubt, Jesus is sending me to spread his love.

What words of encouragement do I need to hear Jesus speak to me?

What do I want to say to Jesus?

I close my prayer – like Thomas, with my own declaration of belief.