

livingtheword

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Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

Reading 1 Acts 5:12-16

Many signs and wonders were done among the people at the hands of the apostles.

They were all together in Solomon's portico. None of the others dared to join them, but the people esteemed them. Yet more than ever, believers in the Lord, great numbers of men and women, were added to them. Thus they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and mats so that when Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on one or another of them.

A large number of people from the towns in the vicinity of Jerusalem also gathered, bringing the sick and those disturbed by unclean spirits, and they were all cured.

Ps 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

Responsorial Psalm

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."

R. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.

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:

R. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.

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.

R. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.

Reading 2 Rev 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19

I, John, your brother, who share with you the distress, the kingdom, and the endurance we have in Jesus, found myself on the island called Patmos because I proclaimed God's word and gave testimony to Jesus.

I was caught up in spirit on the Lord's day and heard behind me a voice as loud as a trumpet, which said, "Write on a scroll what you see." Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me, and when I turned, I saw seven gold lampstands and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, wearing an ankle-length robe, with a gold sash around his chest.

When I caught sight of him, I fell down at his feet as though dead. He touched me with his right hand and said, "Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last, the one who lives. Once I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever. I hold the keys to death and the netherworld. Write down, therefore, what you have seen, and what is happening, and what will happen afterwards."

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."

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.

Reflection Questions

- Reading the passages slowly and reflectively, what word, phrase or idea strikes you in the readings? (circle or underline them)
- What do you think God is trying to say to you personally through these words?
- Early followers of Jesus were fearful that authorities would persecute them and their families. Consequently 'many dared not join the Apostles in the Temple porch'. Is there something you would like to join in in your Church family but are scared for some reason? What would help you get over your 'fear'?
- Easter changed the disciples. A presence and power of Christ comes out of Peter that heals the sick and disturbed. It is primarily actions and 'signs' that helped people 'believe'. What signs and wonders could be done by your hands to bring Christ to the sick and disturbed?
- John, the Beloved Disciple, the writer of the Book of Revelation, was exiled on the island of Patmos because he 'gave testimony to Jesus'. These words are from a courtroom scene of interrogation and trial. Yet in the midst of imprisonment he has deep and enlightening 'revelations' from Christ. John shares he experiences the *distress* of trials, a *kingdom* vision which sustains him, the *endurance* and comforting presence of being *in Jesus*. Is there any experience of the disciple John that you can identify with in your life at present?
- While other disciples had believed in Peter and John and Mary, Thomas refused and placed certain conditions on his belief. He needed Jesus to be very 'real' for him. Jesus responded to Thomas' probing and questioning. Do you identify with Thomas or know someone who is like Thomas? What is the question or source of 'unbelief'? How could you be like Jesus for unbelievers?
- Peace is a special gift Jesus promises to his disciples. The disciples are afraid of the Jews and meeting behind 'locked doors'. Jesus repeats his words of peace twice. Peacefulness, as a gift of the spirits forgiveness and presence is to be characteristic of a disciples encounter with the world and the world with us. Can you say you are 'at peace'?
- What is one action that you will do to 'livetheword' this week?