

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 were 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.

REFLECTION OF POPE LEO XIV

12 April 2026

Today, on the Second Sunday of Easter, dedicated to Divine Mercy by Saint John Paul II, the Gospel recounts the appearance of the risen Jesus to the Apostle Thomas (cf. Jn 20:19–31). This event took place eight days after Easter, while the community was gathered together. There, Thomas encountered the Master, who invited him to look at the marks of the nails and to put his hand into the wound in his side, and to believe (cf. v. 27). This scene invites us to reflect on our own encounter with the risen Jesus. Where can we find him? How can we recognise him? How can we believe? Saint John, who narrated the event, gives us precise indications: Thomas met Jesus on the eighth day, in the gathered community, and recognised him in the signs of his sacrifice. His profession of faith, the highest in the entire Fourth Gospel, emerged from this experience: "My Lord and my God!" (v. 28).

Of course, it is not always easy to believe. It was not easy for Thomas, and it is not easy for us either. Faith needs to be nourished and sustained. For this reason, on the "eighth day" — that is, every Sunday — the Church invites us to do as the first disciples did: gather together and celebrate the Eucharist. During Mass, we listen to the words of Jesus, we pray, we profess our faith, we share God's gifts in charity, we offer our lives in union with the Sacrifice of Christ. His Body and Blood nourish us, so that we too may become witnesses of his Resurrection, as indicated by the term "Mass," which means "sending forth," or "mission" (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1332).

The Sunday Eucharist is indispensable to the Christian life. Tomorrow I will depart for my Apostolic Journey to Africa. Some of the martyrs of the early African Church, particularly the Martyrs of Abitene, have left us a beautiful testimony in this regard. When offered the chance to save their lives by renouncing the celebration of the Eucharist, they replied that they could not live without celebrating the Lord's Day. It is there

that our faith is grows and is strengthened. It is there that our efforts, though limited, are united by God's grace to the actions of the members of a single body — the Body of Christ — for the accomplishment of a single great plan of salvation that embraces all humanity. It is through the Eucharist that our hands become “the hands of the Risen One,” giving witness to his presence, mercy and peace. The signs of work, sacrifice, illness and the passing of the years are often etched into our hands, just as they are in the tenderness of a caress, a handshake, or a gesture of charity.

Dear brothers and sisters, in a world that is in such great need of peace, this calls on us more than ever to be steadfast and faithful in our Eucharistic encounter with the risen Lord, so that we may go forth as witnesses of charity and messengers of reconciliation. May the Virgin Mary help us to do this, she who is blessed because she was the first to believe without seeing (cf. Jn 20:29).

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/Homily?



Head: Thomas encounters Jesus in the gathered community and recognises him through his wounds. What does this suggest about where and how we come to know the risen Christ?



Heart: Thomas moves from doubt to a personal confession of faith: “My Lord and my God.” What has shaped your own belief in Jesus — and where is it still being tested or deepened?



Hands: The disciples are not only comforted; they are sent. How might your participation in the community — especially in the Eucharist — shape the way you live, speak, and witness this week?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. “Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray”)
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others’ prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the ‘Glory Be’.