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## SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

B

### FIRST READING

The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

4:32-35

**T**he followers of Jesus all felt the same way about everything.  
None of them claimed that their belongings were their own,  
and they shared everything they had with each other.

In a powerful way the apostles told everyone  
that the Lord Jesus was now alive.

God greatly blessed his followers,  
and no one went in need of anything.  
Everyone who owned land or houses would sell them  
and bring the money to the apostles.  
Then they would give the money to anyone who needed it.

The word of the Lord.

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM

118:2-4, 22-24

*R. (1) Give thanks, for the Lord is good.  
God's love is everlasting.*

*or:*

*R. Alleluia.*

Let Israel shout,  
"God is always merciful!"  
Let the family of Aaron  
the priest shout,  
"God is always merciful!"  
Let every true worshiper  
of the Lord shout,  
"God is always merciful!"

*R. Give thanks, for the Lord is good.  
God's love is everlasting.*

*or:*

*R. Alleluia.*

The stone that the builders  
tossed aside

has now become  
the most important stone.  
The Lord has done this,  
and it is amazing to us.  
This day belongs to the Lord!  
Let's celebrate and be glad today.

*R. Give thanks, for the Lord is good.  
God's love is everlasting.*

*or:  
R. Alleluia.*

## **SECOND READING**

We are God's children.

A reading from the first letter of John

5:1-3

**B**eloved:

If we believe that Jesus is truly Christ,  
we are God's children.

Everyone who loves the Father will also love his children.

If we love and obey God,  
we know that we will love his children.

We show our love for God by obeying his commandments,  
and they are not hard to follow.

The word of the Lord.

## **ALLELUIA**

John 20:29

*R. Alleluia, alleluia.*

You believe in me, Thomas, because you have seen me;  
happy those who have not seen me, but still believe!

*R. Alleluia, alleluia.*

## **GOSPEL**

After eight days Jesus came in and stood among them.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to John

20:19-29

The disciples were afraid of the Jewish leaders,  
and on the evening of that same Sunday  
they locked themselves in a room.  
Suddenly, Jesus appeared in the middle of the group.  
He greeted them and showed them his hands and his side.  
When the disciples saw the Lord,  
they became very happy.

After Jesus had greeted them again, he said,  
“I am sending you, just as the Father has sent me.”  
Then he breathed on them and said,  
“Receive the Holy Spirit.  
If you forgive anyone’s sin,  
they will be forgiven.  
But if you don’t forgive their sins,  
they will not be forgiven.”

Although Thomas the Twin was one of the twelve disciples,  
he was not with the others when Jesus appeared to them.  
So they told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But Thomas said, “First, I must see the nail scars in his hands  
and touch them with my finger.  
I must put my hand where the spear went into his side.  
I won’t believe unless I do this!”

A week later the disciples were together again.  
This time Thomas was with them.  
Jesus came in while the doors were still locked.  
and stood in the middle of the group.  
He greeted his disciples and said to Thomas,  
“Put your finger here and look at my hands!  
Put your hand into my side.  
Stop doubting and have faith!”

Thomas replied, “You are my Lord and my God!”

Jesus said, “Thomas, do you have faith because you have seen me?  
The people who have faith in me without seeing me  
are the ones who are really blessed!”

The gospel of the Lord.

## Second Sunday of Easter — Cycle B

### Prayer:

Thank you Jesus,  
For loving us even when we have questions, doubts and fears, like Thomas.  
Help us to always know your love.  
In your name we pray.  
Amen

### Readings:

Acts of the Apostles	4:32-35
Psalm	118:2-4, 22-24
1 <sup>st</sup> Letter of John	5:1-3
John	20:19-29

### Reflection:

I really like the apostle Thomas who we hear about in today's Gospel. He seems to have been a very practical and loyal person who loved Jesus very much. One story about him occurs when Jesus is asked to go to the tomb of his friend Lazarus. Some of the other apostles don't want Jesus to go because they think it is a set-up and there will be people there who want to kill Jesus. Thomas knows that Jesus is not going to let that stop him so Thomas declares that he will go with Jesus even if it means he could be killed, too. The other story that involves Thomas happens at the Last Supper. Jesus tells his friends that he will be leaving them. Thomas wants to know where he is going and how exactly to get there so he can go too. He wants specific directions.

In today's story, Thomas is away when Jesus appears to the apostles and doesn't believe them when they tell him about it when he gets home. After all, Thomas knows Jesus is dead and is very sad to lose his friend and teacher. He is once again very practical. He will not believe that Jesus is with them again until he can actually see him and touch his wounds.

I think any of the other apostles would have reacted the same way if they had been the one who had not been at home and I think many of us may have felt the same way, too. Sometimes it is really hard to believe in things when we don't have proof; when we can't see, hear or touch them. It is even harder when it is something that is scary. Because this is so hard, God helps us by giving us faith. Faith is believing in something or someone without having proof.

God wants us to know in our minds and in our hearts that God is always with us, loving us and helping us. God wants us to believe in all that Jesus said and did. Sometimes this is difficult because we can not see, hear or touch God. So how can we know that God is there?

*(continued on p. 2)*

**Discussion/Activity:**

Materials needed: An electric fan with several pieces of ribbon or yarn tied to the front of it. 8 ½ x 11 paper (blank or with the phrase "I BELIEVE" written on it): 1 for each child. Markers/Crayons, etc.

Turn on the fan. Let it oscillate so all of the kids can feel it or have them each walk by it.

1. What does wind look like? (After several answers, tell them that you want to know what it looks like not what it does)
2. We cannot see the wind and do not know what it looks like, so how do we know it is there? We can see what it does – blows the strings, outside we can see the leaves move or our hair, etc. We can also feel it.
3. How do you know your parents love you? It is something that you can hold and see? We know our parents love us because of how they treat us and all they do for us. We can feel our parents love especially when they hug and kiss us and also in their smile.
4. How can we know that God is with us? Like Thomas, we were not there when Jesus appeared. We are not able to see or touch him. We know that God is here because just like the wind and our parents love, we can see what God does in the beauty of creation, the help that is given to those in need, and the closeness we feel when we pray. We also feel God's love in all of the people who love and care for us.

Ask each child to write and decorate the words "I BELIEVE" in large letters, centered length-wise (landscape). Then help them fold the sign into a paper fan. Tell them that every time they use the fan and feel the breeze/wind it creates that they should remember that God is with them and loves them. They should also remember this every time they feel the wind outside, see the leaves rustle, see the beauty of a flower, hear a cheery "hello" from a friend, and feel their parents' warm embrace in a hug.

**One Last Thought:** Going back to our Gospel story today. Note that Jesus was not angry with Thomas for questioning. He is happy that Thomas was finally able to believe that Jesus is again with them. Of course, he says that it would have been really good if Thomas could have believed without having seen. I think Jesus is showing us that it is OK to question and occasionally have doubts as long as we ultimately know how much He loves us and that He is always with us.