**FOR THE WEEKEND OF APR. 26-27, 2025**

Second Sunday of Easter

**Gospel Reading**

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 nail marks 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 Messiah,

the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

**Intercession**

May God strengthen our faith so that we can believe without proof, and may we help spread faith in Christ through support of the Bishop’s Stewardship Appeal.

**Copy for Bulletin Announcement**

It’s understandable that the apostles were frightened after Jesus’ crucifixion. An angry mob had just demanded His execution. As His followers, could they not be next? But Jesus came to comfort them amid their fear, doubts, and suffering. The locked door they hid behind could not keep Jesus from tending to their needs. Twice He says, “Peace be with you.” Then He breaths the life-giving breath of the Holy Spirit on them, saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” In their need, Christ not only brings the comfort of His presence, but He also brings the strength of the Holy Spirit. His disciples are transformed from feeling like abandoned followers, quaking behind locked doors, to empowered preachers to whom Jesus says, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”

Locked doors are no match for Jesus. What are our locked doors? Fear of intimacy with God, and what that intimacy will require of us? An overscheduled life, full of much activity but not much meaning? Spiritual boredom or the lack of energy or desire to go deep with God? No matter what our “locked doors” are, Jesus can walk right through them, bringing His peace and strength to sustain us.

Jesus gave us His Church so that we can feel His presence. Let us build up this wonderful gift by supporting the Bishop’s Stewardship Appeal, which brings the light of Christ to our brothers and sisters.

**Copy for Pulpit Announcement**

Doubt gets a dirty rap. Only Thomas, who clearly vocalized his wariness of Jesus’ resurrection, is dubbed “Doubting Thomas.” Yet the other apostles didn’t quite believe the women who visited the tomb and reported that Jesus was not there. They had to run to the tomb to see for themselves. And in today’s Gospel, they are huddled in a room, behind locked doors, fearful. This doesn’t speak to unshakeable faith!

Through Thomas’ doubt, comes great faith. After Jesus shows Thomas His wounds, Thomas exclaims, “My Lord and my God!” – not “my friend” or “my teacher.” He declares that Jesus is the Messiah. Thomas’ belief is strengthened through doubt. Questioning our faith isn’t a sign of imperfection or weakness. Rather, questions can lead to fuller understanding of our Lord, a deeper connection to Him. If the apostles, who followed Jesus, listened to Him preach, saw Him perform miracles, *really* knew Him, had doubts, then we are in good company with our own struggles. Like Thomas, they can pave the way to profound faith and the peace Christ promises.

Christ proclaims, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” How are you bringing this peace to others? One way is by supporting the Bishop’s Stewardship Appeal. Please prayerfully consider a gift today and help bring His peace and strength to those around you.

**Social Media Post/Content**

Photo: Two sets of clasping hands

Header: “Peace be with you.” – John: 13:8-9

Copy: When you are afraid, draw strength in God’s love! Through support of the Bishop’s Stewardship Appeal, we bring Christ’s peace and strength to others.