

Almighty and everlasting God, who in the Paschal mystery established the new covenant of reconciliation: Grant that all who have been reborn into the fellowship of Christ's Body may show forth in their lives what they profess by their faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

LOOK

Have you ever missed out on an important event that everyone else got to see?

“Seeing is believing.” Agree? Disagree? Discuss.

BOOK

John 20:19-31

19When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” 20After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” 22When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” 24But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25So the other disciples told 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 in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

26A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them.

Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” 27Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” 28Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” 29Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.” 30Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. 31But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

- 1) The disciples were frightened and confused even though Mary had told them Jesus was alive, and Jesus had told them he'd be coming back. Why?
- 2) Jesus appeared and his first words were “Peace be with you”. Do you suppose the disciples were worried about having deserted and denied Jesus?
- 3) This passage is the only reference in John to Pentecost, the bestowing of the Holy Spirit. How is it different than the Pentecost account in Acts 2? (No languages, empowers disciples to forgive sins, much smaller group, happens much earlier after the resurrection).
- 4) Thomas only wanted what everyone else had gotten: a personal experience with Jesus. Did Jesus rebuke him for his doubt at the end of this passage – Have you believed because you have seen me?

- 5) John is writing to a community two or three generations after the resurrection. None of them had seen Jesus. They had to rely on stories passed down from generation to generation. How are we similar to that community? How are we different?

TOOK

We usually disparage ‘doubting Thomas’. Do you think he got a bad deal? Does Jesus judge him for doubting?

In the gospels, people believed when they had an experience with Jesus. How do we experience Jesus 2000 years after he rose from the dead? What is our equivalent of placing our hands in his side?

If Jesus appeared to us now, would we believe it was really him? Or would we want more proof? How is doubt vital to our faith? What would be enough to ‘Easter’ us?

Give examples of resurrection you have seen in your own life, or those around you.

How does our belief that Jesus is alive change how we move in the world? How can we mirror the resurrection to others?

“Faith is a mystery of the heart that the mind tries to solve. To admit that we take certain things on faith is to say that we are willing, in limited circumstances, for things not to make perfect sense.” Clayton Schmit, *Feasting on the Word*