



*Doubting Thomas* – English, c. 1200  
The Getty Collection

**THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER**  
**APRIL 19, 2020**  
**SUNDAY PRAYER**  
**GRACE CHURCH, TRUMBULL**

Dear Ones,

Alleluia, Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, alleluia! For our observation of Easter this year, I thought I'd prepare something a little different, perhaps even a little lighter, for our use together (and at a distance)! As a change from Morning Prayer, we will be praying the so-called Ante-Communion (literally, the "Before-Communion"). The pattern of prayers and readings will be what we have grown accustomed to on most Sundays, with some additional prayers for use during the week

Continue to reach out to your loved ones, don't forget to mail in your pledges, and please continue to support the recovery community as well as ministries for those who are food insecure.

You are in my prayers daily,

# THE WORD OF GOD

## Hymn: We walk by faith, and not by sight (Hymnal #209)

1 We walk by faith, and not by sight; no  
2 We may not touch his hands and side, nor  
3 Help then, O Lord, our unbelief; and  
4 that, when our life of faith is done, in

gra-cious words we hear from him who spoke as  
fol-low where he trod; but in his prom-ise  
may our faith a-bound, to call on you when  
realms of clear-er light we may be-hold you

none e'er spoke; but we be-lieve him near.  
we re-joice, and cry, "My Lord and God!"  
you are near, and seek where you are found:  
as you are, with full and end-less sight.

Words: Henry Alford (1810-1871), alt. Music: *St. Botolph*, Gordon Slater (1896-1979) Copyright © Oxford University Press. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

Leader  
People

Alleluia. Christ is risen.  
The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known,  
and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our  
hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may  
perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## The Hymn of Praise *Pascha Nostrum*

Alleluia.

Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us; \*

therefore let us keep the feast,

Not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, \*

but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Alleluia.

Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; \*

death no longer has dominion over him.

The death that he dies, he dies to sin, once for all; \*

but the life he lives, he lives to God.

So also consider yourselves dead to sin, \*

and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Alleluia.

Christ has been raised from the dead, \*

the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

For since by a man came death, \*

by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, \*

so also in Christ shall all be made alive. Alleluia.

*1 Corinthians 5:7-8; Romans 6:9-11; 1 Corinthians 15:20-22*

## The Collect of the Day

Leader The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Leader Let us pray.

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, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## The First Reading

**Acts 2:14a,22-32**

Reader A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd, "You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know— this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But

God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. For David says concerning him,

'I saw the Lord always before me,  
for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken;  
therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;  
moreover my flesh will live in hope.  
For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,  
or let your Holy One experience corruption.  
You have made known to me the ways of life;  
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

"Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying,

'He was not abandoned to Hades,  
nor did his flesh experience corruption.'

This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses."

Reader        The Word of the Lord.  
People        Thanks be to God.

### Psalm 16

### *Conserva me, Domine*

- 1 Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you; \*  
I have said to the LORD, "You are my Lord,  
my good above all other."
- 2 All my delight is upon the godly that are in the land, \*  
upon those who are noble among the people.
- 3 But those who run after other gods \*  
shall have their troubles multiplied.
- 4 Their libations of blood I will not offer, \*  
nor take the names of their gods upon my lips.
- 5 O LORD, you are my portion and my cup; \*  
it is you who uphold my lot.
- 6 My boundaries enclose a pleasant land; \*  
indeed, I have a goodly heritage.
- 7 I will bless the LORD who gives me counsel; \*  
my heart teaches me, night after night.

8 I have set the LORD always before me; \*  
because he is at my right hand I shall not fall.  
9 My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices; \*  
my body also shall rest in hope.  
10 For you will not abandon me to the grave, \*  
nor let your holy one see the Pit.  
11 You will show me the path of life; \*  
in your presence there is fullness of joy,  
and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

### **The Epistle**

**1 Peter 1:3-9**

Reader A reading from the First Letter of Peter.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith-- being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire-- may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

### **The Gospel**

**John 20:19-31**

Reader A reading from the Gospel of John.

When 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." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then 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." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So 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."

A 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." Then 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." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But 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.

Reader        The Word of the Lord.  
People        Thanks be to God.

### **A Reflection**

**The Rev. Dr. Paul Jacobson**

Alleluia. Christ is risen.  
*The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.*

On this second Sunday of Easter, we always hear the same Gospel, no matter the year of the lectionary cycle. It's a gospel story, a good news story, of how life looks after the resurrection of Jesus. The reading falls into two distinct parts, each of which, for different reasons, is important to us in this time of pandemic.

### **PART ONE**

We find ourselves in an house, behind closed doors. It's now Sunday evening, **THAT** Sunday evening. The disciples and their company have gathered – well, that sounds a bit polite – they had **FLED** from Jesus' side and are now cowering in this room; the doors are barred and locked.

John tells us that it was for "fear of the Jews," but I think it's sufficient to say that it was for fear, period. Try to imagine how they might have felt that night. The world as they knew it had ended. Their beloved leader had been executed, and now his body was missing. The core of their being had been snatched away.

It's almost as if the disciples had entombed themselves – in parallel to Jesus. The difference, of course, is that Jesus submitted to burial out of love. The disciples sign on to entombment out of fear. They are overwhelmed with everything that has happened.

Overwhelmed. It seems such a simple word. But it's a word we all know better in these weeks as the entire planet is overwhelmed by COVID-19. And in addition to the staggering death toll and economic damage, we are, each of us, overwhelmed with having to change the way we live. Many of us are isolated in ways we could never have imagined. We are engulfed and paralyzed with loss, grief, fear – and sometimes, shame and blame.

Suddenly, amongst the overwhelmed disciples, Jesus appears. There he is, standing in front of them. Imagine what's going on in their heads and hearts?

*So, Mary and the other women WERE right (don't you hate when that happens?). He IS alive and right here in front of us – we who had run away.*

The plates of emotion start to shift– from slack-jawed amazement to wondering what Jesus has in store for those of us who had fled; we who must have broken his heart.

Does he remind Peter that he had been warned about denying him? Does he fuss about who went where in that time between Gethsemane and the Garden Tomb? Does he scold anyone at all about anything? No. He simply says, *Peace be with you.*

Imagine for a moment what that must have felt like. Peace. Jesus breathing on us allows us to breathe. Really breathe.

The gospel story today is John's version of the beginning of the Church. Not in the tongues of fire or language – but the giving of the Holy Spirit. Or, in another reading of the Greek -- giving the breath that is holy.

He breathes on them – as God did to Adam at creation. He gives them a gift – gives them AS a gift to the whole world.

*Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
fill me with life anew,  
that I may love what thou dost love,  
and do what thou wouldst do.<sup>1</sup>*

In a breath, that very evening, the disciples get to start practicing resurrection. Today, this very day, how can we live into the resurrection when death seems to be in charge? How do we hold tight to the promise that, through the resurrection, death has trampled death, and bestowed life on those in the tomb?

How, in your own experience of darkness and isolation in these days does the risen Christ appear to you? The voice of a loved one on the telephone, or in the digital world? A neighbor who brings you groceries? A stranger that sews masks? A sunny day? A flowering tree? I suggest you might make a list to help you in dark days.

Then, how does Jesus breathe on you, giving you peace, and giving you as a gift to the world? The writer Parker Palmer reminds us that "the mission of the church is not to enlarge its membership, not to bring outsiders to accept its terms, but simply to love the world in every possible way – to love the world as God did and does."<sup>2</sup>

Whenever we're afraid and hiding out, all locked up, God comes to us in the midst of our fear and says, "Peace be with you." Whatever doubts churn in our minds, whatever

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<sup>1</sup> Edwin Hatch, 1878.

<sup>2</sup> Parker Palmer, *In the Company of Strangers*.

sins trouble our consciences, whatever pain and worry bind us up, whatever walls we have put up or doors we have locked securely, God comes to us and says, "Peace be with you."

Then God sends us out into the world to be justice and peace, salt and light, hope for the world. This is possible, if we keep our eyes open, our minds limber, and our hearts soft and willing to love. As God sent Jesus, God sends us, this very day.

## PART TWO

Now enter poor Thomas. The Thomas who was called "The Twin" but who we call "The Doubter." When the disciples had locked themselves in, Thomas was not there. Where was he? We can only guess. But he wasn't huddled in fear with the others. Maybe he was running essential errands. Maybe he wasn't as afraid as the others. Maybe he had decided just to get on with life. Can you imagine having been left out? Perhaps his saying, "unless I put my finger in the mark of the nails...I will not believe" was that gruff bravado in the face of pain.

And there, that second Sunday evening, with all the disciples gathered, including Thomas, there is Jesus again, saying "Peace be with you." My colleague Debie Thomas<sup>3</sup> writes,

There's a great deal to love about Thomas's encounter with Jesus, but what I love most is that Jesus appears to his skeptical disciple in a body that is scarred and wounded. A body that openly bears its traumatic history. A body that refuses to hide its suffering, its sorrow, its brokenness. What Jesus sports are not old wounds. They are wounds so raw that the doubting disciple places his fingers inside of them. Perhaps Jesus winces when Thomas touches him, but to me, the wincing signals real life, lived at a level we can comprehend. It signals real engagement. Real presence. Real pain. It speaks the very words I hunger to hear: "I am with you. I am with you where it hurts. I don't float thousands of sanitized feet above reality. Even after death, I dwell in the hot, searing heart of things. Exactly where you dwell."

"In my experience," she continues, "Christians are expected to put a lot of stock in completed victories. We value the race won, the mountain scaled, the enemy defeated, the obstacle overcome. We welcome stories of failure to an extent, but only when those stories are shared in retrospect, long after the sordid worst is over. Sin that has surrendered to holiness? That's a Christian story. But sin that clings? Challenges that won't ease up? A wound — physical, psychological, or relational — that remains? We squirm. We turn our eyes away. We worry."

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<sup>3</sup> Debie Thomas, "Unless I See," <https://www.journeywithjesus.net/lectionary-essays/current-essay?id=2607>



We do worry, don't we? We tend to think of resurrection life as unblemished, a sort of cosmic Photoshop. But here's the thing: we worship a risen, yet still wounded, Lord. Sit with that for a moment. A risen, yet still wounded, Lord. I am reminded of the verse from Matthew Bridges stirring hymn, "Crown him with many crowns":

*Crown him the Lord of love!  
Behold his hands and side,—  
Rich wounds, yet visible above,  
In beauty glorified.*

Jesus' wounded body reminds us that some hurts are for keeps. Some wounds remain, even after resurrection. Those very wounds are our entry into resurrected life. Jesus shared our human frailty completely, even unto death. And in raising Jesus from the dead, God assures us that our own wounds are never the end of the story, though the marks remain.

If you are finding the joy of Easter difficult to access right now, rest in the fact that Jesus never sheds the marks of his pain — not even when he bursts from the tomb. Contemplate the wonderful truth that ours is a religion of paradoxes: we Christians live by dying, receive by giving, rule by serving. Our job is not to collapse these paradoxes, but to honor their complexities, and live fruitfully within them. Jesus' resurrected body — his victorious body — still retains its scars. Allow the mystery of his glorified wounds to speak to you.

In the words of today's opening hymn,

*That, when our life of faith is done,  
in realms of clearer light  
we may behold you as you are,  
with full and endless sight.<sup>4</sup>*

Through the resurrection "God has given *us* a new birth into a living hope" (1 Peter 1:3). Alleluia! The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

## **The Nicene Creed**

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,

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<sup>4</sup> Henry Alford, "We walk by faith, and not by sight." H-209.

God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father.  
Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
    he came down from heaven:  
by the power of the Holy Spirit  
    he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,  
    and was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
    in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
    and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
    and his kingdom will have no end.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.  
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the Prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
    and the life of the world to come. Amen.

### **The Prayers of the People**

### **Form II**

*In the course of the silence after each bidding, the People offer their own prayers, either silently or aloud.*

I ask your prayers for God's people throughout the world; for our Bishops Ian and Laura; for this gathering; and for all ministers and people.

Pray for the Church.

*Silence*

I ask your prayers for peace; for goodwill among nations; and for the well-being of all people.

Pray for justice and peace.

*Silence*

I ask your prayers for the poor, the sick, the hungry, the oppressed, and those in prison.

Pray for those in any need or trouble.

*Silence*

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him.  
Pray that they may find and be found by him.

*Silence*

I ask your prayers for the departed [especially \_\_\_\_\_ ],  
Pray for those who have died.

*Silence*

*Members of the congregation may ask the prayers or the thanksgivings of those present*

I ask your prayers and thanksgivings for \_\_\_\_\_ .

### **Grace's Parish Prayer Cycle**

Loren Dennert.

### **Diocesan Cycle of Prayer**

St. Andrew's, Meriden; Christ Church, Middle Haddam; St. George's, Middlebury;  
Holy Trinity, Middletown.

Clergy whose work is not in parishes; multi-vocational priests; clergy of ECCT whose  
ministry is carried out in other countries or dioceses.

### **Anglican Cycle of Prayer**

The Church of Ireland.

*Silence*

Praise God for those in every generation in whom Christ has been honored [especially  
\_\_\_\_\_ whom we remember today].

Pray that we may have grace to glorify Christ in our own day.

*Silence*

Hasten, O Father, the coming of your kingdom; and grant that we your servants, who now live  
by faith, may with joy behold your Son at his coming in glorious majesty; even Jesus Christ,  
our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

**The Lord's Prayer** *feel free to use whatever version you prefer*

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.

Leader Let us bless the Lord. Alleluia, Alleluia!  
People Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia!  
Leader May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the  
power of the Holy Spirit. *Romans 15:13*  
People Amen.

**Hymn: Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord (Hymnal #178)**

The musical score is written on three staves in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is simple and repetitive, with lyrics written below the notes. The first staff begins with a repeat sign. The lyrics are: 'Al-le - lu - ia, al-le - lu - ia! Give thanks to the ris-en Lord. Al-le - lu - ia, al-le-'. The second staff continues with 'lu - ia! Give praise to his Name.' followed by four numbered verses: '1. Je - sus is Lord of all the earth, 2. Spread the good news o'er all the earth: 3. We have been cru - ci - fied with Christ. 4. Come, let us praise the liv - ing God,'. The third staff concludes with 'He is the King of cre - a - tion. Al - le Je - sus has died and has ris - en. Now we shall live for ev - er. joy - ful - ly sing to our Sa - vior.'

**MISCELLANEOUS PRAYERS**

**A Collect for Sundays**

O God, the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: Do not leave us comfortless, but send us your Holy Spirit to strengthen us, and exalt us to that place where our Savior Christ has gone before; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

**For Peace**

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **For Mission**

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **For those who face great uncertainty**

God of the present moment,  
God who in Jesus stills the storm  
and soothes the frantic heart;  
bring hope and courage to all  
who wait or work in uncertainty.  
Bring hope that you will make them the equal  
of whatever lies ahead.  
Bring them courage to endure what cannot be avoided,  
for your will is health and wholeness;  
you are God, and we need you.

*Adapted from A New Zealand Prayer Book, p. 765*

### **A Collect in Times of Pandemic**

Grant we beseech thee, merciful Lord, help and deliverance unto us, who are visited with grievous sickness and mortality. Sanctify to us this our sore distress, and prosper with thy continual blessing those who labor to devise for mankind protection against disease and pain; through him who both healed and hallowed pain, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

*Proposed Prayer Book 1928 (Church of England)*

### **For the Victims of Addiction**

O blessed Lord, you ministered to all who came to you: Look with compassion upon all who through addiction have lost their health and freedom. Restore to them the assurance of your unfailing mercy; remove from them the fears that beset them; strengthen them in the work of their recovery; and to those who care for them, give patient understanding and persevering love. Amen.

### **A Prayer Attributed to St. Francis**

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is discord, union;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.  
Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

### **The General Thanksgiving**

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,  
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks  
for all your goodness and loving-kindness  
to us and to all whom you have made.  
We bless you for our creation, preservation,  
and all the blessings of this life;  
but above all for your immeasurable love  
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;  
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.  
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,  
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,  
not only with our lips, but in our lives,  
by giving up our selves to your service,  
and by walking before you  
in holiness and righteousness all our days;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

### **A Prayer of St. Chrysostom**

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one  
accord to make our common supplication to you; and you  
have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two  
or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the  
midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions  
as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of  
your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.