

## The Second Sunday of Easter – Sunday 16 April 2023

• Acts 2.14a, 22-32; Psalm 16; 1 Peter 1.1-12; John 20.19-31

In this Gospel reading, it's interesting to note that Thomas wasn't present when Jesus first visited the disciples. He has often been referred to as doubting Thomas, but we see in this reading that the other disciples believed only after Jesus showed them His hands and His side. I wonder why Thomas has been signalled out as the doubter? Questioning is an important part of the faith journey.

Brian McLaren shared how doubt has often been a tool of love, drawing him ever closer to the heart of God.

- We pray that our doubts will draw us ever closer to God.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of Wontulp-Bi-Buya College in Cairns and Nungalinya College in Darwin.

*Text: Judy Fay St John's Cathedral, Brisbane © Anglican Board of Mission, 2023*

### Reflection

Please don't give Thomas a hard time! We all have our ways of processing and accepting, of grieving and overcoming fears, whether they are unfounded or very real. God's great gift to us all, is our unique place in the whole people of God. It is depicted so well here. Frightened and shocked people, who have left their families, livelihood and villages, have travelled with, listened to and learned from, Jesus. He had literally upended their world, their cultural practices, their beliefs and personal faith understanding, and brought into focus a new faith-filled Way of living. The threat from the Jewish authorities was very real, with consequences to life and soul, as they had just witnessed. They were linked not only by their new faith choices, but also by fear and isolation, confusion and deep grief. Thomas' focus on the 'here and now' is completely understandable.

In the space between them, they found Jesus.

His peace settled in them as they breathed in God's Spirit. They received peace as they accepted God's love and forgiveness. Jesus specifically addresses Thomas' concerns so that he, too, may also understand what is beyond moment, time and circumstance. Sometimes, we all need to focus on the space between us to be revealed, and so, together with the whole people of God, glimpse, with greater clarity, God's truth, peace and love.

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**Readings - Sunday 16 April 2023 – Second Sunday of Easter**



# HOLY INNOCENTS

## ANGLICAN CHURCH BELAIR

### Sentence

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. *1 Peter 1.3*

### Collect

Almighty and eternal God,  
the strength of those who believe  
and the hope of those who doubt:  
may we, who have not seen, have faith  
and receive the fullness of Christ's blessing;  
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### First Reading: Acts 2.14a, 2.22-32

<sup>14</sup> But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say.

<sup>22</sup> '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— <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. <sup>25</sup> 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; <sup>26</sup> therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover, my flesh will live in hope. <sup>27</sup> For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption. <sup>28</sup> You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence." <sup>29</sup> '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. <sup>30</sup> 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. <sup>31</sup> Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, "He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption." <sup>32</sup> This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.

For the word of the Lord, *Thanks be to God.*

### Psalm 16

<sup>1</sup> Preserve me, O God:

**for in you have I taken refuge.**

<sup>2</sup> I have said to the Lord, You are my lord:

**and all my good depends on you.**

<sup>3</sup> As for those who are held holy on the earth:

**the other gods in whom people delight,**

<sup>4</sup> Though the idols are many that they run after:

**their offerings of blood I will not offer,  
nor take their name upon my lips.**

<sup>5</sup> The Lord is my appointed portion and my cup:

**you hold my lot in your hands.**

<sup>6</sup> The share that has fallen to me is in pleasant places:

**and a fair land is my possession.**

<sup>7</sup> I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel:

**at night also he has instructed my heart.**

<sup>8</sup> I have set the Lord always before me:

**he is at my right hand, and I shall not fall.**

<sup>9</sup> Therefore my heart is glad and my spirit rejoices:

**my flesh also shall rest secure.**

<sup>10</sup> For you will not give me over to the power of death:

**nor suffer your faithful one to see the Pit.**

<sup>11</sup> You will show me the path of life:

**in your presence is the fulness of joy,  
and from your right hand flow delights for evermore.**

### Second Reading: 1 Peter 1.1-12

<sup>1</sup> Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, <sup>2</sup> who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood: May grace and peace be yours in abundance. <sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup> In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, <sup>7</sup> 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 honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>8</sup> 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, <sup>9</sup> for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. <sup>10</sup> Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours made careful search and inquiry, <sup>11</sup> inquiring about the person or time that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated, when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the subsequent glory. <sup>12</sup> It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look!

For the word of the Lord, *Thanks be to God.*

### Gospel: John 20.19-31

<sup>19</sup> 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.’ <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ <sup>22</sup> When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’ <sup>24</sup> But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> 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.’ <sup>26</sup> 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.’ <sup>27</sup> 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.’ <sup>28</sup> Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ <sup>29</sup> 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.’ <sup>30</sup> Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup> 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.

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