

Here's a text if you've only a minute ...

'Fear not; I am the first and the last.'

Second Reading

'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so am I sending you.'

Gospel

Heavenly Father and God of mercy,
we no longer look for Jesus among the dead,
for he is alive and has become the Lord of life.
From the waters of death you raise us with him
and renew your gift of life within us.

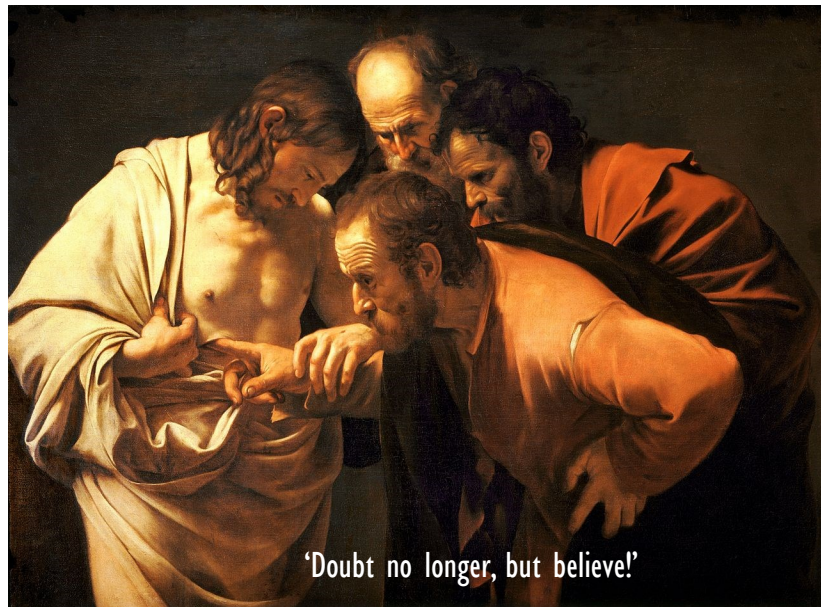
Increase in our minds and hearts the risen life we share with Christ,
and help us to grow as your people
towards the fullness of eternal life with you.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:

Acts 5: 12–16; Ps. 117 (118); Apocalypse 1: 9–13.17–19; John 20: 19–31

Caravaggio: *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas* (1601–02)
Wikimedia Commons



'Doubt no longer, but believe!'

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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

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Second Sunday of Easter
(Divine Mercy Sunday)
Year C, 27th April 2025

'My Lord and my God!'

In this week's readings we see the contrast between the apostles' profound fears and doubts in the upper room, and their emboldened faith as the early Church begins to flourish.

In the **First Reading**, the apostles perform great 'signs and wonders' healing the sick. We have a picture of a thriving ministry, with people coming from far and wide to hear and witness the message of God.

The **Psalms** continues in the spirit of rejoicing, reminding us that God's faithful love endures forever. We feel a sense of true resurrection; that through this love, we will always triumph over persecution and rejection. John (**Second Reading**) humbly identifies himself as a 'brother and partner' in our suffering. He offers us encouragement that Jesus is still very much alive and that, with patience and perseverance, we will overcome all suffering.

The **Gospel** replays a powerful encounter between the frightened disciples and the risen Jesus. He brings a message of peace, and a call to action to continue his ministry .

As **Pilgrims of Hope** in this Jubilee year, we pray that, guided by the Holy Spirit, we will be inspired by the apostles' courage, humility and solidarity with those who are sick, lonely, fearful and marginalised.

How might we bring the peace and encouragement of Jesus into our everyday encounters during this Easter season?



Opening Prayer

God of everlasting mercy, who in the very recurrence of the paschal feast
kindle the faith of the people you have made your own,
increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed,
that all may grasp and rightly understand in what font they have been washed,
by whose Spirit they have been reborn,
by whose Blood they have been redeemed.

First Reading Acts 5: 12–16

Many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the Apostles. And they were all together in the Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns round Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

Before reading today's Scripture, I go to my favourite place for prayer, indoors or outdoors. I spend a few moments shutting out the everyday concerns that may be clamouring for my attention. They will wait.

When I am ready, I take a couple of deep breaths, and then slowly read these words from the Acts of the Apostles.

Which aspect of the text strikes me most? Perhaps the growth in number of followers, the sense of belonging to a new community, the healing of the sick ... or something else?

Maybe I can sense the atmosphere of feverish excitement as the new Christian Church grows.

How does this compare with our present Church, especially in parts of the Western world, with its declining numbers, ageing clergy, and closing church buildings?

I pause and ponder.

Where do I see signs of hope and growth?

As I look at my own involvement as a Christian, how do I contribute to a vibrant, active Christian Church?

What sort of witness do I give?

If I find myself disheartened or negative, maybe I turn to the Lord and ask him to help me find again the enthusiasm and fervour of these new Christians. Perhaps I pray that the Church will once again be held 'in high esteem'.

Before concluding my prayer, I thank the Lord for being with me today, and for helping me look forward with renewed hope to my life as a member of the Christian community.

Gospel John 20: 19–31

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.' And 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 withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.'

Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, 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 in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.'

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, 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; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, 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 believed.'

After coming to some inner quiet, I read this familiar story. I let my imagination flesh out the details: the locked door; Jesus showing his wounds; Thomas, doubting, but so honest. I hear all the different voices, their tone, their accent. I engage all my senses. Then I pause and ponder.

In what way is this scene relevant to my life today?

The Lord is sending me to do his work. How does this make me feel: eager ... anxious ... ill-prepared ...?

With whom do I feel a close affinity? The fearful disciples, the disbelieving Thomas ...? Maybe it depends on the day.

Perhaps I, too, need to seek reassurance from the Lord?

What do I say to him as he looks at me and gives me his peace?

Jesus knows what is in my heart. I listen to his words of encouragement.

As I hear Thomas's profession of faith, I may recall times when this phrase has been important to me. I speak to my Lord and my God about them.

In time, I bring my prayer to a close, giving thanks for these precious moments.