

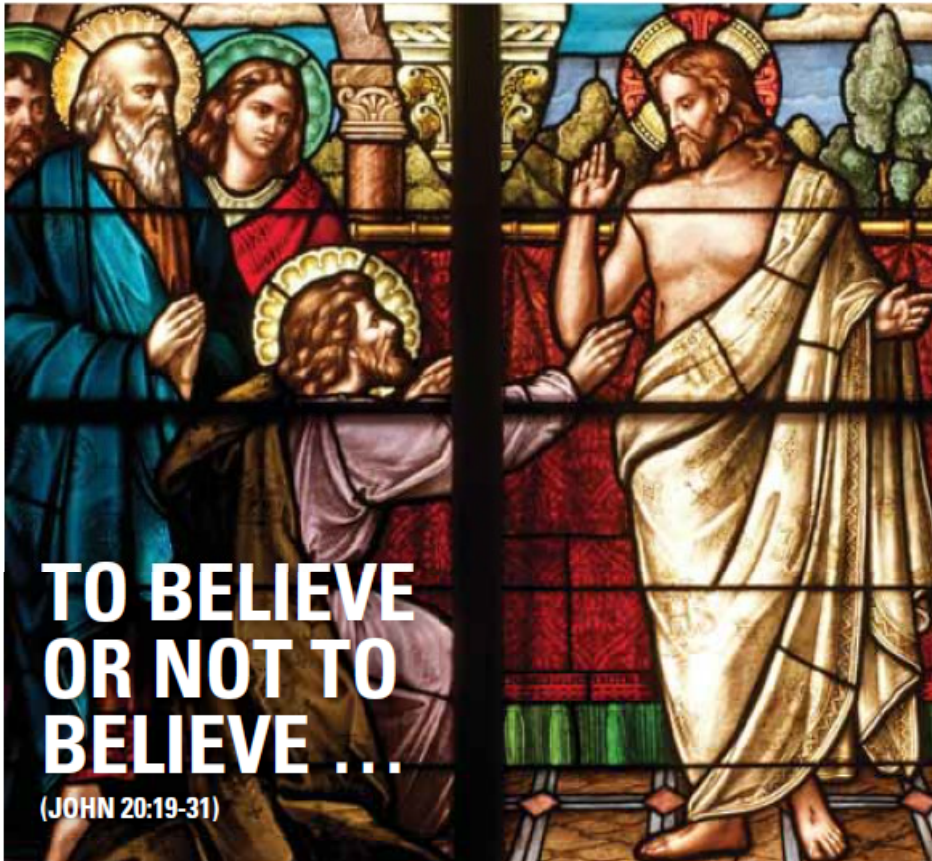
11 APRIL 2021

# Sunday Message

2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE WORD

Year B • Psalter Week 2



**TO BELIEVE  
OR NOT TO  
BELIEVE ...**

(JOHN 20:19-31)

*Stained glass window depicting Thomas' encounter with the risen Jesus*

Our Gospel passage today relates two occasions when the disciples experience the risen Jesus among them. The first takes place on the evening of Easter Sunday, when Jesus had made himself known to Mary Magdalene. The setting has a negative tone, that of fear on the part of the disciples, fear which turns to joy as Jesus' promise that they would see him again is fulfilled.

One of the differences between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics is that, in John's account, the disciples have no part in Jesus' ministry. There are no "apostles", only "disciples". Jesus acts alone. Now, the risen Jesus commissions the disciples to carry on his work and bestows on them the Holy Spirit by breathing on them in a gesture reminiscent of the Lord God infusing the breath of life into the first human being. As well as bringing eternal life, the gift of the Holy Spirit empowers the disciples to forgive or retain sins, which will be part of their mission.

A week later, Thomas, the disciple who represents the sceptical point of view, encounters the risen Jesus for himself. Jesus challenges him to set aside his doubts about the testimony of the others by testing the reality of Jesus' wounds. Thomas does not actually touch Jesus' hands and side, but makes the supreme declaration of faith in Jesus as "My Lord and my God!"

The Gospel according to John ends with the statement often called "the Johannine Beatitude", with Jesus saying to Thomas, and therefore to all of us, whom Thomas represents, "Happy [Blessed] are those who have not seen and yet believe." ■

## REFLECT

The main theme running through the Fourth Gospel is that of believing. In the various characters who appear in dialogue or meetings with Jesus, John presents us with different reactions to Jesus and his message. In our passage today, Jesus commissions his disciples to continue his mission of confronting people and bringing them to a point of crisis or decision as to whether they will believe or not. Jesus actually says to Thomas, "Do not be an unbelieving person, but a believing one". In the mission of passing on the good news, a positive decision will be expressed by the person being baptised and entering a new life with the risen Jesus, with their sins forgiven. A negative choice will result in not being baptised.

The celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation developed in the Church well after the writing of the Gospel accounts in response to difficult situations which affected the community as a whole. The practice of individual confession came later again. Although the forgiving or retaining of sins may suggest to us this familiar practice, we might bear in mind that the Gospel text refers to the decision of the person about accepting baptism. The disciples are not being given the power or the right to determine whether or not someone deserves to be absolved of their faults. It is the person who judges themselves by deciding to believe or not. ■

## LEARN

The noun "faith" does not occur in the Fourth Gospel: the verb "to believe" is found nearly one hundred times:

Belief in Jesus is, therefore, not something we "possess", but something we "do" or "put into practice".

The individuals who appear in the Gospel according to John, such as Thomas, represent different types of people and their reaction to Jesus and his message.

## DO

As you close your door in the evening, put yourself in the place of the disciples: be aware that the risen Lord is with you with his loving (not judgemental) presence.

## SAY

**Blessed am I who have not seen and yet believe.**

(see John 20:29)

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

Like newborn infants, you must long for the pure, spiritual milk, that in him you may grow to salvation, alleluia.

**GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;

you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**COLLECT**

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.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of  
the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING**

Acts 4:32-35

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.  
The whole group of believers was united,  
heart and soul; no one claimed for his own  
use anything that he had, as everything they  
owned was held in common.

The apostles continued to testify to the  
resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great  
power, and they were all given great respect.

None of their members was ever in want,  
as all those who owned land or houses would  
sell them, and bring the money from them, to  
present it to the apostles; it was then distributed  
to any members who might be in need.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**PSALM**

Psalm 117

Response:

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,  
for his love has no end.

or  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

1. Let the sons of Israel say:  
"His love has no end."

Let the sons of Aaron say:  
"His love has no end."  
Let those who fear the Lord say:  
"His love has no end." (R.)

2. The Lord's right hand has triumphed;  
his right hand raised me up.  
I shall not die, I shall live  
and recount his deeds.  
I was punished, I was punished by the  
Lord,  
but not doomed to die. (R.)

3. The stone which the builders rejected  
has become the corner stone.  
This is the work of the Lord,  
a marvel in our eyes.  
This day was made by the Lord;  
we rejoice and are glad. (R.)

**SECOND READING**

1 John 5:1-6

A reading from the first letter of St John.  
Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ  
has been begotten by God;  
and whoever loves the Father that begot him  
loves the child whom he begets.  
We can be sure that we love God's children  
if we love God himself and do what he has  
commanded us;  
this is what loving God is –  
keeping his commandments;  
and his commandments are not difficult,  
because anyone who has been begotten by  
God  
has already overcome the world;  
this is the victory over the world –  
our faith.

Who can overcome the world?  
Only the man who believes that Jesus is the  
Son of God;  
Jesus Christ who came by water and blood,  
not with water only,  
but with water and blood;  
with the Spirit as another witness –  
since the Spirit is the truth.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!

Jesus said: "You believe because you can  
see me.

Happy are those who have not seen and yet  
believe."

Alleluia!

**GOSPEL**

John 20:19-31

A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
John.

In the evening of that same day, the first day  
of the week, the doors were closed in the  
room where the disciples were, for fear of the  
Jews. Jesus came and stood among them.  
He said to them, "Peace be with you," and  
showed them his hands and his side. The  
disciples were filled with joy when they saw  
the Lord, and he said to them again, "Peace  
be with you.

"As the Father sent me  
so am I sending you,"

After saying this he breathed on them and  
said:

"Receive the Holy Spirit.  
For those whose sins you forgive,  
they are forgiven;  
for those whose sins you retain,  
they are retained."

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of  
the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus  
came. When the disciples said, "We have  
seen the Lord," he answered, "Unless I see  
the holes that the nails made in his hands  
and can put my finger into the holes they  
made, and unless I can put my hand into his  
side, I refuse to believe." Eight days later  
the disciples were in the house again and  
Thomas was with them. The doors were  
closed, but Jesus came in and stood among  
them. "Peace be with you," he said. Then he  
spoke to Thomas, "Put your finger here; look,  
here are my hands. Give me your hand; put  
it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe."  
Thomas replied, "My Lord and my God!"  
Jesus said to him:

"You believe because you can see me.  
Happy are those who have not seen and yet  
believe."

There were many other signs that Jesus  
worked and the disciples saw, but they are  
not recorded in this book. These are recorded  
so that you may believe that Jesus is the  
Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this  
you may have life through his name.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

*(all bow during the next two lines)*

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried;  
he descended into hell;  
on the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God the  
Father almighty;  
from there he will come to judge the living  
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting.  
Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Accept, O Lord, we pray,  
the oblations of your people  
(and of those you have brought to new birth),  
that, renewed by confession of your name and  
by Baptism,  
they may attain unending happiness.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

Bring your hand and feel the place of the  
nails,  
and do not be unbelieving but believing,  
alleluia.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Grant, we pray, almighty God,  
that our reception of this paschal Sacrament  
may have a continuing effect  
in our minds and hearts.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

# Our Lady & St Edmund of Abingdon

## 1 Radley Rd, Abingdon on Thames, Oxon, OX14 3PL

We are a *LiveSimply* parish aiming to live Simply, Sustainably and in Solidarity with the Poor

Parish Priest: Fr. Jamie McGrath Tel: 01235 520375  
Parish Secretary: Lisa Paterson Tel: 01235 520375  
Office Hours: 10.30am-12.30pm Tuesday to Friday  
Office Email: abingdon@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

We live stream all services

Safeguarding Team: Tel. 07572 935 230  
Visits at JR Hospital: Priest/Chaplain 01865 221732  
Visits and Help: Society of Vincent de Paul Group, contact via Parish Office  
Parish Website: [www.ourladyandstedmund.org.uk](http://www.ourladyandstedmund.org.uk)  
Primary School: St. Edmund's School, Radley Road, Abingdon, OX14 3PP Tel 521558



Roman Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth Reg. Charity No 246871

[www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)



### PRIVATE PRAYER

We are blessed that the church can be open, but for **private prayer only**, on the following days and times:

- ✠ **Tuesdays: 12pm to 1pm**
- ✠ **Fridays: 12pm to 1pm**

### MASS BOOKINGS:

**On Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April you can book for Masses from Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> April.**

**PLEASE** remember to give as many dates and times when you could attend, and book **on** the Monday – otherwise you may be disappointed. Also be clear on the number of people you are booking for and let us know if you would like to attend more than one Mass during the week.

## HOW TO BOOK FOR MASS

### No Internet Access?

Phone **07395 946827** EACH MONDAY between 10am and 11am ONLY to book a place for the FOLLOWING week

### Have Internet Access?

**DON'T** phone. Instead, email: [contact@ourladyandstedmund.org.uk](mailto:contact@ourladyandstedmund.org.uk) EACH MONDAY, to book a place for the FOLLOWING week

### CONFESSIONS

By appointment only for now. Please contact the **parish office** to book an appointment.

### NEWSLETTERS

We are currently still not able to offer any printed material in church. Please bring your own newsletter with you if you would like to (you can download it from our website).

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Week of Easter (Year B)

**Attendance through booking system only, but also available on our live stream**

#### Sunday 11 April

10.15am Mass  
2.00pm Mass in Polish  
6.30pm Mass

#### Divine Mercy Sunday

(Mike Moriarty, RIP)  
*(Special intention)*

#### Monday 12 April

9am Mass (Jack & Sally Murphy, RIP)

#### Tuesday 13 April

NO Mass See: [www.ourladyandstedmund.org.uk/english-martyrs-vale-of-white-horse](http://www.ourladyandstedmund.org.uk/english-martyrs-vale-of-white-horse) for other masses

#### Wednesday 14 April

7pm Mass (Martin Moffatt - 80<sup>th</sup> birthday)

#### Thursday 15 April

9.30am Mass (Declan Ryan, RIP)

#### Friday 16 April

7pm Mass *(Special intention)*

#### Saturday 17 April

12pm Mass *(Special intention)*



### SPIRITUAL COMMUNION PRAYER:

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot today receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.



### “URBI ET ORBI” – POPE’S EASTER MESSAGE

Here are extracts from Pope Francis’s Easter message:

The Easter message does not offer us a mirage or reveal a magic formula. It does not point to an escape from the difficult situation we are experiencing. The pandemic is still spreading, while the social and economic crisis remains severe, especially for the poor. Nonetheless – and this is scandalous – armed conflicts have not ended and military arsenals are being strengthened. That is today’s scandal.

In the face of, or better, in the midst of this complex reality, the Easter message speaks concisely of the event that gives us the hope that does not disappoint: “Jesus who was crucified has risen”.

The risen Christ is hope for all who continue to suffer from the pandemic, both the sick and those who have lost a loved one.... The crucified and risen Lord is comfort for those who have lost their jobs or experience serious economic difficulties and lack adequate social protection.... The risen Jesus is also hope for all those young people forced to go long periods without attending school or university, or spending time with their friends.... May the light of the risen Jesus be a source of rebirth for migrants fleeing from war and extreme poverty.... There are still too many wars and too much violence in the world! May the Lord, who is our peace, help us to *overcome the mindset of war*.

Amid the many hardships we are enduring, let us never forget that we have been healed by the wounds of Christ (cf. *1 Pet 2:24*). In the light of the Risen Lord, our sufferings are now transfigured. Where there was death, now there is life. Where there was mourning, now there is consolation. In embracing the cross, Jesus bestowed meaning on our sufferings and now we pray that the benefits of that healing will spread throughout the world.

You can read the full message from Pope Francis on the News page of our website, where you can also view the message on video.



### THANK YOU

Fr Jamie thanks you all for your generous support in the Easter Offerings.

### WHAT IS DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY?

Divine Mercy Sunday reminds us that Jesus laid down His life on the Cross for everyone in whole world in order to show us His infinite love and mercy. He makes that mercy available to us in His Church, above all through the sacraments and through prayer.

In 2000, when Pope John Paul II canonized St. Faustina Kowalska, during the ceremony he declared: “It is important then that we accept the whole message that comes to us from the word of God on this Second Sunday of Easter, which from now on throughout the Church will be called ‘Divine Mercy Sunday’.” In the various readings, the liturgy indicates the path of mercy through faith which, while re-establishing the relationship of each person with God, also creates new relations among human beings.

The Divine Mercy image depicts Jesus at the moment he appears to the disciples in the Upper Room, after the Resurrection, when he empowers them to forgive or retain sins. This moment is recorded in *John 20:19-31*, which is the Gospel reading for this Sunday. This reading is placed on this day because it includes the appearance of Jesus to the Apostle Thomas (in which Jesus invites him to touch his wounds). This event occurred on the eighth day after the Resurrection (*John 20:26*), and so it is used on the liturgy eight days after Easter. It also, however, includes the appearance of Jesus to the disciples on Easter evening, a week earlier, in which he empowered them to forgive or retain sins.



### PENTECOST CHALLENGE

Friends of the Holy Land are organising a Pentecost Challenge which consists of walking, cycling, running or swimming the 84-mile pilgrimage route from Bethlehem to Nazareth. The aim is to enable children to stay in Christian schools. If you aren’t sporty, you can just make a donation online (**please don’t put it into the church collection**). For more information, please visit: [www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/pentecost](http://www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/pentecost)



### SUPPORTING MISSIO (RED BOXES)

During 2020, **£2,873.03** was raised in support of missionaries. Thank you for your generosity and thanks also to our parish reps (Clare, Wendy and Gerard) for all their hard work.