

EASTER 2 – 2022
Acts 5:12-16
Rev 1:9-11; 12-13; 17-19
Jn 20: 19-31

At times doubt can be a good thing on our spiritual journey because if we never doubt there is no room for spiritual growth. During times of doubt God is able to challenge or surprise us. On the other hand, excessive doubt can throw us into turmoil and even cause us to turn away from our journey with Christ temporarily or permanently.

'Maranatha' was an early Christian greeting. It means 'The Lord comes.' Today's gospel tells us of the first time the risen Jesus came to the Christian community. They were gathered together in a room in Jerusalem with the doors locked because they were afraid of the Jews. Their minds would also be locked against each other. There would be confusion and perhaps tension because body of Jesus was missing. There would be doubt about the stories that some of them had seen Jesus. There would be guilt about their having failed Jesus and shame about their cowardice. There would be mixed feelings about Judas' suicide.

Into this maelstrom of emotions Jesus came through the locked doors to unlock their minds. "Peace be with you," he said. These were the very words he used at the end of the Last Supper when he told them they would be scattered. "I have said this to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (Jn16:33).

Jesus then showed them his hands and side, the sign of victory and compassion. The disciples now saw him with true vision. They were filled with joy because they recognised Jesus who had come to them from beyond death, so he must be the Messiah, and if so, God's promised age had dawned.

Jesus again offered them peace and commissioned them to be extensions of himself in the world. He gave them authority to free people from their sins. Jesus' mission was to bring freedom to God's people. He transformed water into wine, promised springs of living water and gave us his flesh to eat and brought new life to the sick afflicted and the dead. All these are different ways of describing forgiveness. This is our mission, to be bringers of forgiveness to others and so make God's love visible to them. If we refuse to forgive we will be in control and keep them imprisoned in their sin.

A week later, in the same Upper Room Thomas was present. He is the logical one and wouldn't believe the stories about Jesus coming to them unless he saw for himself. Jesus appeared again and extended his peace to them. He invited Thomas to touch his wounds, an invitation that was not accepted because once Thomas saw, he believed. Like Peter who fell on his knees in his fishing boat and acknowledged Jesus as Lord, so Thomas fell down and acknowledged Jesus as his Master and Lord. All he wanted to do now was follow him. Thomas finally recognise who Jesus truly is and now trusted him to lead the way to the Father. Heaven and earth interact with each other in and through Jesus. The Kingdom is here.

Jesus' disciples were the faithful remnant of God's new people, the Church. They preached the gospel and showed signs of God's love, forgiveness and mercy through healings, and presented the challenge of repentance assuring the crowds that God's mercy brings forgiveness which itself brings freedom.

Not everyone who heard the apostle's message recognised its true meaning, but the Remnant Church grew. It is not surprising that today is known as Divine Mercy Sunday for the readings make clear that God loves us and challenges us to be liberators of others through extending God's challenge to them to change direction in their lives and openly receive his forgiveness, mercy and spiritual freedom.

Christ is risen and reveals God's mercy.

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April 2022