

## This Week's Readings

### First Reading: Acts 2: 42-47.

Revitalized by the Spirit of the Risen Christ, the early Christians aimed at creating a loving, sharing community.

### Second Reading: 1 Peter 1: 3-9.

Through the resurrection we become a new generation that will live forever with Christ.

### Gospel: John 20: 19-31.

Belief in the resurrection is based upon a profound and loving faith in the risen Jesus through his witnesses.



## Points for Reflection

**Today's Gospel** notes that on the first day of the week after Jesus' death, the disciples are gathered behind locked doors. The reason is "fear of the Jews". The disciples are afraid that Jesus' persecutors will pursue and arrest them, too. But we can surmise another reason for the locked doors: the disciples are afraid of Jesus himself. The Risen Lord has appeared to the women but not to them. The apostles have seen the empty tomb but not Jesus.

Recalling the events of the past days, they remember how they fled when Jesus was arrested and led away; how Peter denied three times that he even knew Jesus; how their faith faltered; and how Judas hanged himself in despair. They are torn between the desire to see him and the fear of facing him. They have come together, but they do not know what to do. To this group of fearful and guilt-ridden disciples Jesus suddenly appears. He has no reproach for their cowardice, betrayal, lack of faith, or despair. His first words are, "*Peace be with you!*" The Hebrew word *Shalom* (peace) stands for the fullness of God's blessings.

Three times Jesus wishes the disciples peace: twice during the first apparition and once during the second one. His greeting tells them that they are forgiven, that he is glad to see them, and that "all is well again." Jesus does not scold Thomas for his stubbornness. He gently invites the Apostle to touch him and believe. The Risen Lord's shalom brings peace, joy, and reconciliation. But Jesus does not stop at forgiving his disciples. He breathes on them the Holy Spirit and says, "*If you forgive men's sins, they are forgiven them.*" He gives his disciples the mission and power to be channels of his forgiving love.

The disciples must face their past, forgive themselves for the wrong things they have done or the good things they failed to do, and in turn give peace and forgiveness to others. Freed from their past, the disciples take on the Risen Lord's mission of reconciling the world to the Father. God, St Paul says, "*has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation*" (2 Cor. 5: 18).

“The Holy Spirit reaches into the deepest interior of a person, but it does not settle there. It makes the person look outward to see the needs of others. It gets us to see that others are hurting, are bound. If we don’t forgive them, if we don’t unbind them, then they are trapped. Like Jesus, we have to take our scars more lightly. That’s one of the big disadvantages about being risen from the dead. You have no alternative but to go around cheering others up” (George McCauley).

--- Fr Carlo Tei

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### Kids' Corner

*Colour the picture of Jesus with doubting Thomas.*

