

Sunday Message

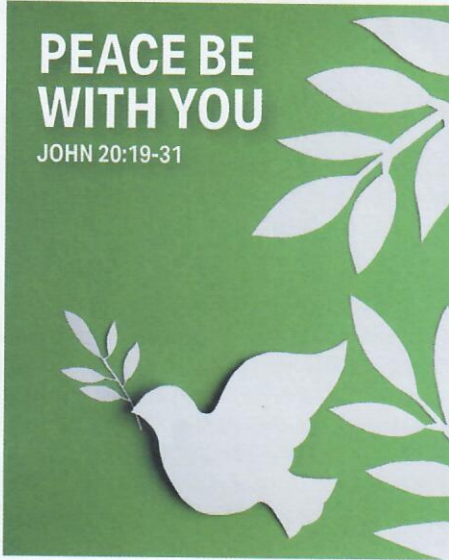
2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE WORD

Year A • 12 April 2026 • Psalter Week 2

PEACE BE WITH YOU

JOHN 20:19-31



It's the evening of the first Sunday after Jesus' crucifixion, and his disciples have gathered behind locked doors. They're afraid that those who executed Jesus will come for them too, so they quiver in fear. Suddenly, Jesus appears before them. They are flabbergasted, but Jesus shows them his wounds, and they know it is the Lord.

Jesus' very first words to them, the first words he speaks after his resurrection, are of peace: "Peace be with you." Moments later, he repeats those words: "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you."

One of the disciples, Thomas, was absent that evening, so when they tell him that Jesus is alive, he doesn't believe them. Why would he?

A week later, the disciples are in the locked room again and this time Thomas is with them. Once more, Jesus appears, and again, his first words are a greeting of peace. He knows what Thomas had said about him and so he offers him an invitation. "Put your finger here; see my hands. Put your hand into my side. Doubt no more but believe."

Thomas doesn't need to touch Jesus. Seeing with his own eyes is enough. He gives the most wonderful profession of faith in all of history: "My Lord and my God!"

In reply, Jesus offers words of comfort and praise for all future believers: "You believe because you can see me; happy are those who have not seen and yet believe."

Peace is a gift of our faith. Knowing God is with us, assured of the promise of eternal life, we can be at peace. ■

REFLECT

In his letter introducing the jubilee year 2025, Pope Francis identified several signs of hope. It's telling that the first sign of hope he lists is the urgent desire for peace in our world. "Heedless of the horrors of the past," he writes, "humanity is confronting yet another ordeal, as many peoples are prey to brutality and violence. What does the future hold for those peoples, who have already endured so much? How is it possible that their desperate plea for help is not motivating world leaders to resolve the numerous regional conflicts in view of their possible consequences at the global level?" Is it too much to dream that arms can fall silent and cease to rain down destruction and death?

The need for peace challenges us all, and demands that concrete steps be taken. We must pray, he writes, for an end to war and for negotiations aimed at a lasting peace.

It is easy to see why Pope Francis chose the desire for peace in our world as the first sign of hope. Once again, war is raging on the European continent, creating more refugees than at any time since the 1940s. Fifty-nine wars are now being fought worldwide, either between nations or between ethnic or social groups. Once again, politicians have come to power who seek to build walls and barriers rather than promote harmony and understanding. Once again, hate speech is on the rise, fuelled by social media platforms which, far from fulfilling their stated mission of bringing people together, are being manipulated to stoke conflict and confusion, driving people apart.

We know that bullying, domestic violence, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, sexual exploitation and discrimination are as rampant as ever, while our consumer society leaves many people feeling restless, excluded, angry and unfulfilled.

For all our modern sophistication and technological advances, it seems that division, violence, tribalism, hatred, and revenge are deeply ingrained in our human DNA. Peace is difficult to make or to enjoy.

Jesus promises those who sow peace that they will be called "children of God".

We are peacemakers, first, by knowing that peace is God's gift to us. It is how the resurrected Lord greeted his disciples: "Peace I leave you, my peace I give you." It is what we pray for in the liturgy: "The peace of the Lord be with you." It is what we pray for before receiving Holy Communion. Peace is a gift of our faith.

But to be effective peacemakers, we must be at peace with ourselves. God is the source of peace and calls us to exhibit peace in our own lives. Anger, resentment, failure to forgive, self-pity, lust, restlessness, self-obsession, jealousy, envy, greed, addiction, self-harm, regret – all can keep us from experiencing peace. But the resurrected Lord assures us, "Do not let your hearts be troubled." Troubled hearts are an obstacle to peace. Peacemakers are people at peace with themselves.

We are peacemakers when we make the effort to walk in our opponent's shoes, to try to see things from the other's point of view, when we display a readiness to talk, listen, and understand. Closed minds and hard hearts, incapable of dialogue, are impregnable obstacles to peace.

Finally, we are peacemakers when we actively desire peace and never stop working toward it. Whether it's to build harmony between two people or two families or between two tribes or two nations, the desire for peace is part of our message to the world. ■

LEARN

Faith is a gift never to be taken for granted.

Peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

PRAY

Pray for the people of Palestine, Ukraine, Sudan and all who are victims of war. Pray for a just and lasting peace.

DO

Think of practical ways in which you might show your opposition to war. Is there anybody with whom you need to make your peace?

SAY

"My Lord and my God."

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

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

Or

*Receive the joy of your glory, giving thanks to God,
who has called you into the heavenly kingdom, alleluia.*

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... **Amen.**

FIRST READING Acts 2:42-47

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

The believers devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the Apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the Temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they shared their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** Psalm 118(117):2-4. 13-15b. 22-24. R. 1

R: *Give praise to the LORD, for he is good,
his mercy endures for ever.*

Or **Alleluia.**

- Let the house of Israel say,
'His mercy endures for ever.'
Let the house of Aaron say,
'His mercy endures for ever.'
Let those who fear the LORD say,
'His mercy endures for ever.' **R.**
- They pushed me, pushed me hard to knock me down,
but the LORD was my helper.
The LORD is my strength and my song;
he was my saviour.
There are shouts of joy and salvation
in the tents of the righteous. **R.**
- The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
By the LORD has this been done,
a marvel in our eyes.
This is the day the LORD has made;
let us rejoice in it and be glad. **R.**

SECOND READING 1 Peter 1:3-9

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Peter.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born
again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ
from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled,
and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are

being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed
in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while,
if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that
the tested genuineness of your faith – more precious than
gold that perishes though it is tested by fire – may be found to
result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus
Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though
you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy
that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome
of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.**ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL** John 20:29**R:** *Alleluia, alleluia.*

You believed, Thomas, because you have seen me, says the Lord.

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

R: *Alleluia.***GOSPEL** John 20:19-31

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

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.'

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the
disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written
so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,
and that by believing you may have life in his name.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**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... **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... **Amen.**