

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

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

Psalm Response

'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.'

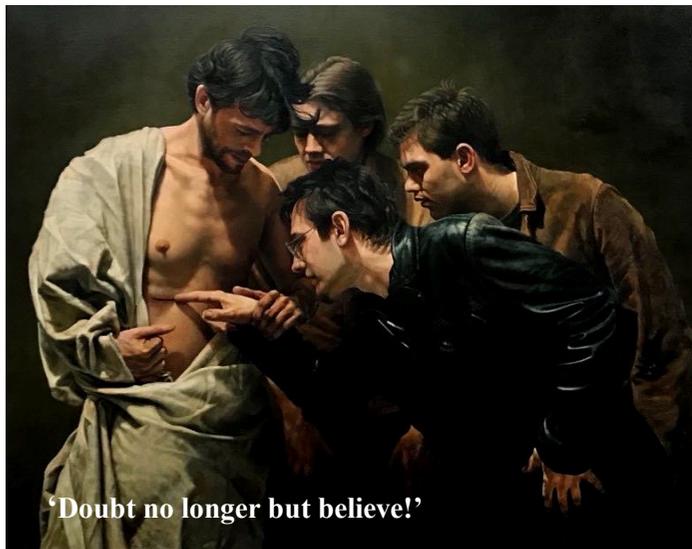
Gospel

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



John Granville Gregory, *Still doubting*
(Bangor Cathedral, N. Wales)
By kind permission of the artist

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ST. BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday)
Year C, 24th April 2022

'Peace be with you!'

The outpouring of God's love and mercy flows throughout this Sunday's liturgy. The joy of resurrection that we celebrate in this Easter season rings out in the words of praise that we repeat with jubilation in today's **Psalm**: 'Give Thanks to the Lord for he is good, His love has no end'. It reminds us that in the midst of dark and challenging times, the presence of the risen Christ is a comfort in our distress.

In the **First Reading**, we hear how the early Church, filled with the Holy Spirit, gather together to worship, bringing the risen Lord's healing to all who seek it. St John, writing from the place where he was imprisoned for his beliefs, describes a vision of God's endless living love (**Second Reading**). The risen Christ is the Alpha and the Omega: the Eternal One stands with us, encouraging us to not be afraid.

Shortly after the death and resurrection of Jesus, the disciples are hiding, fearful of what might happen to them (**Gospel**). Jesus appears among them in the midst of their fear, his presence bringing them peace. Thomas is not there, and cannot believe what he is told. Eight days later, Jesus stands among them again, and the reality of the resurrection is revealed to Thomas, too.

Today, Jesus stands alongside us, tenderly drawing us out from doubt and disbelief. He has breathed his Holy Spirit upon us. Just as he sent the disciples two thousand years ago, today he sends us out, to bring peace and healing to a fractured, hurting world. Let us pray for that peace that only Christ can bring, in our hearts, in our communities and in our world. At this time we especially remember the people of Ukraine and eastern Europe.



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.

Psalm 117 (118)

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

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.'

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.

O Lord, grant us salvation;
O Lord, grant success.
Blessed in the name of the Lord
is he who comes.
We bless you from the house of the Lord;
the Lord God is our light.

Taking all the time I need, I allow myself to become still. I remind myself that even though I may not be aware of it, I am always in the presence of our loving God.

I read the psalm slowly and with reverence. As I do so, I recall how these words have been sung and prayed by countless generations of people, and by Jesus himself. I am connected to them through my prayer.

What words, phrases or images am I drawn to from this psalm of praise?

Trust ... rejection ... refuge ... gratitude ...?

Why are the words that seem to touch me important in my life?

When have I seen answer to prayer? What am I thankful for?

As I draw my prayer to an end, I focus on the opening and closing response to the psalm:

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

I close my prayer with my own words of thanks.

Gospel John 20: 19–31

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 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.' ...

These things 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.

I read the Gospel slowly. I may like to use my imagination to enter into the scene, standing with the confused and fearful disciples in the upper room. What is the mood of the gathering? I let myself wonder ... What are they afraid of? What are my own fears at this time?

I imagine seeing Jesus return again, and the compassion he shows to Thomas. Then I imagine Jesus suddenly being present with me, standing alongside me in my life today.

I allow him to look deeply into my being; knowing, loving and accepting me, just as I am. Even in my doubt, Jesus sends me to spread his love and peace.

What words of encouragement do I need to hear Jesus speak to me?

What do I want to say to him?

I close my prayer – like Thomas, with my own declaration of belief.