

**Easter Two Service**  
**April 11, 2021**

Celebrant: The parishes of the Diocese of Ottawa sit on the unceded territory of the Algonquin nation.

All: **May we dwell in harmony and peace.**

Celebrant: ALLELUIA! Christ is risen!

All: **The Lord is risen indeed!**

Celebrant: May his grace and peace be with you.

All: **May he fill hearts with joy. Alleluia!**

Celebrant: Almighty God,

All: **to you all hearts are open,  
all desires known,**

**and from you no secrets are hidden.**

**Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts**

**by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,**

**that we may perfectly love you,**

**and worthily magnify your holy name;**

**through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Celebrant: Glory to God in the highest,

All: **and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father,**

**We worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your Glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God,**

**You take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;**

**You are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.**

**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**

Celebrant: Almighty and eternal God, the strength of those who believe and the hope of those who doubt; may we, who have not seen, have faith and receive the fullness of God's blessing, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen

The **First Reading** is from the book of Acts, Chapter 4, Verses 32 to 35

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.

With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them.

For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Psalm 133**

Oh, how good and pleasant it is, when brethren live together in unity!

**It is like fine oil upon the head that runs down upon the beard,**

Upon the beard of Aaron, and runs down upon the collar of his robe.

**It is like the dew of Hermon that falls upon the hills of Zion.**

For there the Lord has ordained the blessing: life for evermore.

**The Second Reading** is from the first Book of John, Chapter 1, Verse 1 to Chapter 2, Verse 2 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ according to the blessed St. John -20: 19-31

All: **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though 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; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

The Gospel of Christ.

### **Praise to you Lord, Jesus Christ**

#### Homily

I can hardly imagine what it must have been like for the followers of Jesus after his arrest in Gethsemane and his subsequent trial and most brutal murder that day in Jerusalem. The scriptures tell us that most of the fellowship fled the scene after the arrival of the armed men from Pilate and Caiaphas who so cold-heartedly disturbed the peace of the garden. While Peter is reported to have followed Jesus to the house of Caiaphas, it would appear that all the others raced back to where they had just celebrated the Passover Seder where they barred the door against what they perceived was the threat of their own imminent arrests.

After Pilate condemns Jesus at the behest of the mob gathered, Peter must have gone to join the others and told them the terrible news that all was lost. We believe that John, the youngest disciple, left, joined by Mary Magdalene, Mary of Nazareth (Jesus' mother) and Salome to put their own lives at risk so that Jesus would not die alone. They remained at the foot of the cross until Joseph of Arimathea arranged for Jesus' body to be taken from Golgotha and entombed in what would have been his own final resting place.

While all this was happening outside the walls of the city, the nine remaining disciples and other followers huddled together and whispered questions to one another about what might happen to them, what happened to create such chaos in the movement and on and on...At one point, one of the original twelve left, telling the others that he needed to be with his family and friends in Jerusalem, telling them where they could find him should anything change. His name was Thomas.

Like most of the others, he hailed from the Galilee and was such a strong supporter of Jesus that, when the Lord announced that he was Jerusalem-bound because he needed to be with the family of Lazarus, his friend who had died, it was Thomas who said to the others, "Let us go to Jerusalem with him so we may die with him" -- even after Peter had protested that it was too dangerous a journey to take, that there were too many people who wished to do the carpenter harm. At the last supper, after Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled, believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many resting-places; I go now to prepare a place for you so that where I am, you may be also." To this Thomas questions,

“Lord, how can we follow if we don’t know the way?” “Thomas”, Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, the life...”

Three days later, when Mary of Magdala comes from the empty tomb with the most glorious good news of resurrection, Thomas is not there with the others as Jesus offered the fellowship the gift of divine peace. After Jesus had left them, Peter sends someone to where Thomas is with the message, “Thomas, come home...we have the most incredible news for you. It has to be given in person.” When Thomas returns to the house, Peter tells him of how Jesus had come among them and how he had commissioned the community to go into the world as witnesses to God’s mighty acts of grace and love; and all Thomas says is something like, ‘Yeah right...look, I’ll believe this story of yours only if I can feel the holes in his hands and touch the spear-wound in his side.’ But he remained with the others. One week later, it happened.

As the community was discussing their future and probably getting more and more discouraged and fearful as rumours of the resurrection began to circulate in the general population, Jesus appears in their midst and once again says, “Shalom...peace be with you.” That was all – it was more than enough. Looking around the room, Jesus locks onto Thomas who is standing near the back wall and calls him by name. Before Thomas could say anything, Jesus said, “Thomas, put your hands here in my hands and feel the nail-holes; reach down and run your fingers along the gash in my side...” and Thomas did. As the others watched the mini-drama taking place before them, in the silence Thomas whispers, “My Lord and my God.” As his companion trembles before him, Jesus speaks: “My brother, you believe because you can see and feel; blessed are those who believe without seeing.” Jesus says this not as a put-down of Thomas’ lack of faith, but rather for his need for a faith which is proveable. Jesus knows that each person comes to him and to the gifts of God in their own way, through their own experiences, using the language of their particular lives to be one with the Father. As he had not condemned the cynical thief who dared Jesus to come down from the cross so everyone would know that he was who they said he was, so now Jesus refuses to say to Thomas, “Believe it or else...”

After Pentecost, as the community scattered to the four winds of the empire and beyond, Thomas, according to tradition, journeys to India where he founds a fellowship known to this day as the Mar-Thomist church and he was martyred in 72AD.

Too many people know Thomas only as , you know, ‘DOUBTING THOMAS’ and the name is seen in purely negative terms which I don’t believe is how Jesus ever saw his friend at all. After all, in spite of his rigid personality in which stubbornness, pessimism, and often grim views of the world dominated, Thomas is one of the most loyal of all the disciples, until that fateful day of execution. I believe that for Thomas, the crucifixion is far more than the death of a friend, a mentor – it is the crushing of a dream, it is the trashing of all those years of loyalty and love poured out for what now seemed at best a lost cause and at worst a cruel lie. Thomas must have felt betrayed by his friend and by God when the word comes that Jesus has died and it is over. Betrayal blends with anger... anger that, in Thomas’ mind, Jesus chose death over life and has left them in the lurch, led like lambs to the slaughter. I think he wanted to believe right from the git-go, but Thomas has a hard time getting past what happened the last time he put all his trust, hopes and dreams in the hands of another person? No wonder he said what he said – he wasn’t going to be hurt like that ever again. He was going to be like

what Paul Simon describes in his song, "I am a rock"- "I've built walls, a fortress deep and mighty that no one can penetrate; hiding in my room, safe within my womb, I touch no one and no one touches me...I am a rock, I am an island".

Sometimes, we are so hurt and broken by experiences in our lives that we react in great anger – we scream against the cold darkness because we no longer see or feel the warmth of the light which once enveloped us, cocooned us, kept us safe and feeling loved. We turn away from those things and people who once offered hope and love and compassion and who, at least in our minds, are no longer there for us, and are now the great betrayers and there is nothing left to stay home for. It is within this painfully dark landscape that Thomas is wandering when one of his companions tells him that Jesus is not dead but alive – he truly wants to believe but isn't willing to be stabbed in the back again so he demands proof positive that the news is on the up and up and not some dastardly plot to hurt him even more than he is at that moment. When he encounters the risen Lord in the upper room, he is still angry at his friend for leaving him. Jesus understands this and feels the totality of Thomas' pain and so does not tell him that what he is feeling at that moment is wrong or sinful or ...or. Jesus accepts where Thomas is and leads him gently beside the still waters which had just a moment before been a violent river of rapids and dangerous cataracts. When Thomas says, "My Lord and my God", Jesus just nods and silently says to his friend, "Welcome home."

We are all at times like Thomas, full of confusion, uncertainty, doubt and often anger. We are all at times like Thomas, lashing out against those things that hide under our beds or wait around the side of the house, waiting...waiting. We are all at times like Thomas when everything in which we had put our hopes and dreams lie like shredded newspapers at our feet and we long for the good old days even if they weren't so good in reality. We are all at times like Thomas...

*Celebrant* Let us confess the faith of our baptism, as we say,

**All I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again  
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 the life everlasting. Amen.**

Celebrant: On this the second Sunday of Easter, let us pray for the world, the church and for ourselves.

O God, from whose heart the measure of our faith is not hidden, wrench from us now all religiosity, all rules and regulations in our scheduled lives that separate us from your Holy Spirit.

All: **Lord, hear and have mercy.**

Celebrant: O God, who calls each of us by name to be church, give us love enough to make a difference, give us vision enough to follow, give us endurance enough to hold steadfast in the face of the unholy.

All: **Lord, hear and have mercy.**

Celebrant: O God, who claims us as disciples, bless us now and touch us with your holiness that we might have commitment enough to be good news to the poor.

All: **Lord, hear and have mercy.**

Celebrant: O God of the bruised, we pray for healing. Comfort those who cry in the dark corners: the lonely, the strangers, the weary, the fearful, the disappointed, the anxious, the depressed, the forsaken, the dispirited, the grieving, and all those who lie in sickness and pain.

All: **Lord, hear and have mercy.**

Celebrant: O God, who wept over Jerusalem, open our eyes to those around us who scream in silence the depth of their despair.

All: **Lord, hear and have mercy.**

Celebrant: O God of compassion, heal our hard hearts to tenderness.

All: **Lord, hear and have mercy.**

Celebrant: O God of the oppressed, fire us with justice that we might proclaim liberty to the captives.

All: **Lord, hear and have mercy.**

Celebrant: O God, who gave us the rainbow and parted the Red Sea, we dare to pray for miracles for the powerless.

All: **Lord, hear and have mercy.**

Celebrant: O God of the hungry, we pray for those who have not bread. Remove O Lord the bondage of hunger by removing our shackles so that we might share our bread with others.

All: **Lord, hear and have mercy.**

Celebrant: O God of the homeless and the exiled, we pray for those who have no land. We pray that you will open the doors of our hearts and let your wandering people in.

All: **Lord, hear and have mercy.**

Celebrant: O God of the captives, have mercy on those who must live out their lives enslaved to someone else because of race or politics or economics or faith. Loosen our bonds that we may risk our own securities on their behalf.

All: **Lord, hear and have mercy.**

Celebrant: O Lamb of God, have mercy upon us.

All: **Lord, have mercy**

Celebrant: Christ have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy. Amen**

("Have Mercy on Us" from [Kneeling in Jerusalem](#) by Ann Weems)

We ask you to watch over all our parish family, remembering especially Zachariah, Marjorie, Cheryl, Jeanette, Roy, Emerson, Irene, and their families. May we, by example, draw others towards the glorious Light of the World.

In the Worldwide Anglican Cycle of Prayer, we pray for The Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean.

In our Diocesan Cycle, we pray for Trinity, Ottawa South, and all those who minister there.

We pray for the Director of Financial Ministry, Sanjay Grover.

We pray for the Licensed Lay Readers' Association, and their warden, The Reverend Canon Patricia Martin.

**All: Creating God, you have the power to control the sun and the moon. You are our everlasting light. Help each of us to see light at the end of the tunnel. Sometimes, I can barely remember what light looks like or what it feels like to have simple joy. Support our friends as they struggle with losses and temptations. When these trial plague those whom we love, we feel so helpless to help them – would you show your Light in their lives? We thank you God that you are our rock and healer and that you will bring our mourning and darkness to an end.**

**We thank you for all this in the name of the everlasting Light, Jesus. Amen**

(To See God's Light from God is With You Every Day by Max Lucado)

Celebrant: Lord, we in the church are in danger of becoming a tearless people, unable to rage even in a starless abyss. We have imitated a smiling society, glossing over the hurt, the oppression, the 'peacelessness' on our earth, or we have become caustic and cynical and despairing, insisting on looking the other way as our church members crawl to the altar, the scraps of their lives in their arms.

We were created for covenant keeping and yet, we are in danger of becoming a blindhearted people, buying into the systems, placing our hope in rulers and corporations. Have we not seen? Have we not heard? We persist in clinging to the way things are, or eagerly placing our faith in the newest religious fad, the latest book on "howto" Christianity (in ten easy steps) or the current slogans presented as if they were the Word of God. We are programming and papering ourselves into perpetuity and rationalizing and excusing our immortality. Our energy in complaining, gloomily forecasting our future together. We panic for positions in employment and committees with each special interest group vying for first place in the Kingdom. Perhaps, Lord, it's time for remembering that Jesus stood in the Jordan to be baptized with all the others, long ago casting his lot not with "good" church people but with the poor. His name is EMMANUEL and yet, individually and corporately we have named him GOD WITH ME. Have we not seen? Have we not heard? In the light of the cross, the alternative is anything but hopeless. On the contrary! There is every Scriptural indication that we are called to change who we are in the Kingdom of God, where change is possible, where new resurrection looms. Be present to us Lord in Jesus' name. Amen

("In Search of New Resurrections" from Kneeling in Jerusalem by Ann Weems – adapted)

Celebrant: Christ has no body now on earth but ours, no hands but ours, no feet but ours. Ours are the eyes through which to look Christ's compassion on this world. Ours are the feet with which we are to go about doing good and ours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Amen (St. Teresa of Avila)