

The Second Sunday of Easter

Today is Sunday the 11 April, beginning the Second Week of Easter.

The Tölzer Knabenchor and the Choir of the King's Consort sing Et Resurrexit from Bach's Mass in B minor. 'And on the third day he rose again, in accordance with the scriptures.'

As you begin this prayer today, just listen to the energy and power and exultation in this music... The joy it expresses at the news that Christ is Risen.... The confidence that, ultimately, the struggle against sin and death has already been won for us.

Today's reading is from the Gospel of John.

John 20:19-31

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' 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 retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, 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 the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, 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. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt 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 come to believe.'

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

In this story, we encounter personal belief in the Risen Jesus. Additionally, we are invited to

reflect on whether injuries and pains necessarily mean a joyless life. Have there been wounds and pains in your life healed by the peace Jesus gives?

Are there wounds and pains in your life from which the peace of Jesus is excluded? How can you welcome Jesus into your life to bring the healing you may need?

Now listen to the experience of Thomas as the passage is read again. What most strikes you?

Have there been signs in your life that helped you believe in a Risen, present Jesus? If there have speak to God in thanksgiving for such signs, and, if not, you could perhaps ask the Lord to pour his healing into your life.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.