

## St Peter Chanel & St Joseph Berala

*Streams of living water will flow from within. ~John 7:38*

**2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER—Divine Mercy Sunday**

**19 APRIL 2020**

### Thomas and Faith

In this unusual situation, with the doors of the churches shut and your being asked to stay home, many people need a strengthening in their faith. They believe in Easter, yet there is a question in many minds, *'Is Christ really risen and is he actually with us?'* People in various other times of history also had such need for such assurances to keep their faith. John's Gospel, written in early the 2nd century, addresses the need of the faith community at his time. By the time John was writing the Gospel, there were many converts into the Church who considered that the disciples, who had the privilege of personally meeting Jesus, were superior to them. To them, John narrates a significant act of the risen Jesus. John uses symbolic language in his Gospel.



On the first day of the week is the beginning of creation. The disciples who locked themselves up because of the fear of the outside world were like dead men walking. They needed the life giving presence of God, and they got it. Risen Jesus, the Word of God, appeared to them and breathed on them and said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit."* It reminds us of the creation narrative in Genesis. The breath of God created order and life out of chaos. Humans were created by God breathing into the figure made out of the earth. Resurrected Jesus breathed on the frightened disciples and they were made into a new creation. Jesus gifts them with peace, joy and the Holy Spirit. If you too are a bit lost in the present situation, know that the Risen Christ is breathing the Holy Spirit on you and gifting you with joy and peace.

Eight days later, Jesus appears to the disciples again. This time, Thomas who did not meet Jesus at the beginning of the week was present. He now represents the later converts to the Church. To them also the risen Jesus appears and gifts them with forgiveness, peace and joy. It is the same Jesus who appears at both times. He is the same Jesus who was crucified. To make it clear, Jesus shows his wounds. With this vision of Jesus, Thomas makes the ultimate profession of faith; he says, *"My Lord and My God."* Through this story of Thomas, the Gospel shows that the later converts should not consider themselves any less than the first disciples.

The Gospel of John singles out Thomas to paint the picture of an ideal disciple. While other companions of Jesus were afraid to go with him to Jerusalem from Bethany, Thomas said, *"Let us also go with him and die with him"* (Ref John 11:16). He was also very eager to follow Jesus always and to all places. Therefore Thomas said, *"Lord we do not know where you are going. Then how can we know the way?"* (Ref 14:5) The intensity of Thomas' love for Christ caused him upset at the news that Jesus appeared to other disciples in his absence. Therefore, he said, *"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."* (Ref John 20:25) It is intense love for Jesus and strong desire to follow him which makes you a true disciple of Jesus. Such a strong bond with Christ will enable you to profess Jesus as your Lord and God, just as Thomas did.

Do not let the challenges of present times diminish your love commitment to Jesus. Continue to cherish the Easter gifts of joy and peace. If the early Christians could do it in their uncertainties in a hostile world, we too can do it in spite of the challenges we are faced with now. Without the routine of church practices your faith is tested now. Realise that your personal commitment to Jesus matters more than the Christian culture you are used to.

### Parish Collections

A number of people have been inquiring about how to continue their support for the parish while the church doors are shut.



To make simpler here is a QR Code you can scan with your mobile device and follow the prompt to make a donation.

The Support Us button on the parish website is another way to make donations remotely. Some of you have been getting the account details from the Parish Secretary (Lea) and transferring money. There are also some of you dropping envelopes in the parish letter box.

*....continued over page*

The second collection is for the running of the parish and the first collection for the upkeep of your priests. While the collections are low, we rely on the reserve fund to make up for the short falls in the parish funds. Since the First Collection is always pooled at the Archdiocesan level there is no reserve fund to fall back on. Therefore, currently we are borrowing from the parish funds to meet the short falls in the upkeep of your clergy. To reduce the burden, clergy will be taking 30% less of their stipends during this COVID19 period. Also, measures are taken to reduce the house expenses. A number of parishioners are bringing food to feed me. I should admit this is also helping to cut down on the presbytery experience. I commend you, my parishioners, for your support of your parish and your priests.

~Fr Thomas

### Live Streaming of Liturgies

Remember to join us Monday to Saturday at 8.00am and Sunday at 10.00am. Visit: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCedFcfdv\\_IleHVNmqpWeVA/videos](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCedFcfdv_IleHVNmqpWeVA/videos).



### Thank you for supporting Project Compassion 2020

Covid-19 is affecting all of us. In these challenging times, your kindness and solidarity can make a world of difference to the lives of the most vulnerable. Your support is life saving.

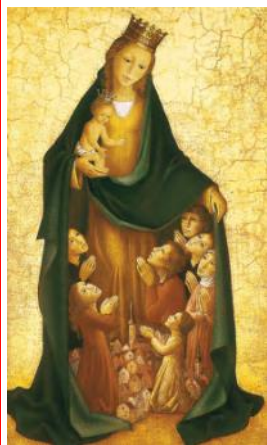
#### Do you have PC boxes and cash to hand in?

You may drop off your Project Compassion donations into the Parish Office Mailbox at any time.

Did you know that you can go online at [lent.caritas.org.au](http://lent.caritas.org.au) and securely donate with your credit card or you can send a cheque to Caritas Australia, GPO Box 9830, Sydney, NSW 2001.

### PRAYER during the coronavirus pandemic

(Adapted from the USCCB)



Mary, Help of Christians, we fly to you today as your beloved children. We ask you to intercede for us with your Son, as you did at the wedding in Cana.

Pray for us, loving Mother, and gain for our nation and world, and for all our families and loved ones, the protection of God's holy angels, that we may be spared the worst of this illness.

For those already afflicted, we ask you to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance. Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful, wipe away their tears and help them to trust.

In this time of trial and testing, teach all of us in the Church to love one another and to be patient and kind. Help us to bring the peace of Jesus to our land and to our hearts.

We come to you with confidence, knowing that you truly are our compassionate mother, health of the sick and cause of our joy. Shelter us under the mantle of your protection, keep us in the embrace of your arms, help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

### INTENTIONS for Fr Thomas to include in his Livestreamed Mass

**Sick:** Sr Tomsy

**Recently Deceased:** Kathleen Kensey, Dolores Andino, Aurora Arcilla, Fr Ray Farrell, Monica Smith

**Anniversary:** Michael Baptiste, Francisca Natividad

**Deceased:** Nellie Lim

**Deceased Members and Friends of:** O'Dwyer & Erwin Families, Amores & Florendo Families

**Birthday:** Suzanne Gomesis (40th), Bertina Cumerlato

**Other Intentions:** For all those affected by the Corona Virus. For the intention of the Holy Father.

**Contact the Parish Office to include your intentions in the Mass by Fr Thomas.**

## ANTIPHONS & READINGS

### Entrance Antiphon

1 Pt 2:2

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

### First Reading

Acts 2:42-47

The whole community remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.

The many miracles and signs worked through the apostles made a deep impression on everyone.

The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed.

They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved.

### Responsorial Psalm

Ps 117:2-4. 13-15. 22-24. R. v.1

**R. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.**

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.' **R**

I was thrust, thrust down and falling but the Lord was my helper. The Lord is my strength and my song; he was my saviour. There are shouts of joy and victory in the tents of the just. **R**

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. **R**

### Second Reading

1 Pt 1:3-9

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy has given us a new birth as his sons, by raising Jesus Christ from the dead, so that we have a sure hope and the promise of an inheritance that can never be spoilt or soiled and never fade away, because it is being kept for you in the heavens. Through your faith, God's power will

guard you until the salvation which has been prepared is revealed at the end of time. This is a cause of great joy for you, even though you may for a short time have to bear being plagued by all sorts of trials; so that, when Jesus Christ is revealed, your faith will have been tested and proved like gold – only it is more precious than gold, which is corruptible even though it bears testing by fire – and then you will have praise and glory and honour. You did not see him, yet you love him; and still without seeing him, you are already filled with a joy so glorious that it cannot be described, because you believe; and you are sure of the end to which your faith looks forward, that is, the salvation of your souls.

### Gospel Acclamation

Jn 20:29

Alleluia, alleluia!

You believe in me, Thomas, because you have seen me; happy those who have not seen me, but still believe!

Alleluia!

### Gospel

Jn 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 can put my finger into the holes they made, 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.'

There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These 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.

### Communion Antiphon

*Cf. Jn 20:27*

Bring your hand and feel the place of the nails, and do not be unbelieving but believing, alleluia.

## REFLECTIONS ON JOHN 20:19-31

### Historical Context – My Lord and my God

This extraordinarily clear statement of belief about the divinity of Jesus appears nowhere else in any of the four gospels. Why does the Gospel of John make this statement and not any of the other gospels? It must be remembered that the Gospel of John was the last of the four gospels to be written – at least 20 years after the Gospel of Mark and some 60 to 70 years after the death of Jesus. The early Christians had been cast out of the Jewish tradition and were making sense of how their own beliefs could stand apart from Jewish tradition. With the break from Judaism, Christians felt able to express their developing belief that Jesus was God.

### Have you thought? Those who have not seen

Jesus says to Thomas, 'You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.' That's us! Jesus' words in the gospel are meant for people like us living today. We are not in the position of Thomas and the other disciples who were able to see the risen Lord face to face and so convince themselves of his rising. The gospel recognises that to believe in the resurrection without that physical, personal encounter with Jesus is to be celebrated even more. Happy are we – blessed are we – who have not seen and yet still believe!

### Scriptural context – Not an ending?

The final two verses of today's gospel passage (Jn 20:30-31) read like the conclusion to the whole gospel. They are a statement of finality about the purpose for writing the gospel and something of a blessing for those who read it. Yet, surprisingly, there is another whole chapter that follows this passage that deals with still more post-resurrection appearances. Most scripture scholars believe that the end of Chapter 20 was the original ending of the gospel and that Chapter 21 is a later addition – possibly added by the community for whom the gospel was originally written.

### Next Week's Readings:

1st Reading: Acts 2:14, 22-23

2nd Reading: 1 Pt 1:17-21

Gospel: Lk 24:13-35

## The bread of Heaven and the cup of salvation

*From the Jerusalem Catecheses by Cyril (about fourth century)*

On the night he was betrayed our Lord Jesus Christ took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples and said: "Take, eat: this is my body." He took the cup, gave thanks and said: "Take, drink: this is my blood." Since Christ himself has declared the bread to be his body, who can have any further doubt? Since he himself has said quite categorically, This is my blood, who would dare to question it and say that it is not his blood?

Therefore, it is with complete assurance that we receive the bread and wine as the body and blood of Christ. His body is given to us under the symbol of bread, and his blood is given to us under the symbol of wine, in order to make us by receiving them one body and blood with him. Having his body and blood in our members, we become bearers of Christ and sharers, as Saint Peter says, in the divine nature.

Once, when speaking to the Jews, Christ said: Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you shall have no life in you. This horrified them and they left him. Not understanding his words in a spiritual way, they thought the Saviour wished them to practise cannibalism.

Under the old covenant there was showbread, but it came to an end with the old dispensation to which it belonged. Under the new covenant there is bread from heaven and the cup of salvation. These sanctify both soul and body, the bread being adapted to the sanctification of the body, the Word, to the sanctification of the soul.

Do not, then, regard the eucharistic elements as ordinary bread and wine: they are in fact the body and blood of the Lord, as he himself has declared. Whatever your senses may tell you, be strong in faith.

You have been taught and you are firmly convinced that what looks and tastes like bread and wine is not bread and wine but the body and the blood of Christ. You know also how David referred to this long ago when he sang: Bread gives strength to man's heart and makes his face shine with the oil of gladness. Strengthen your heart, then, by receiving this bread as spiritual bread, and bring joy to the face of your soul.

May purity of conscience remove the veil from the face of your soul so that by contemplating the glory of the Lord, as in a mirror, you may be transformed from glory to glory in Christ Jesus our Lord. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.



## Frequently Asked Questions on COVID-19

To help parishioners with any questions they may have around COVID-19 and its impact on sacraments such as weddings, baptisms and funerals, you may find the FAQs page on the Archdiocese of Sydney website helpful at this time: <https://www.sydneycatholic.org/coronavirus-frequently-asked-questions/>

## Prayer Resources during time of Pandemic

The Archdiocese of Sydney has a dedicated webpage with prayers and scriptural reflections to help nurture your faith during these difficult times. You'll find the webpage here- <https://www.sydneycatholic.org/coronavirus-updates/prayer-resources-for-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>



## Emergency Cash Appeal.

During COVID-19, many refugees and people seeking asylum need help to prevent homelessness and entering into new heights of destitution and hunger. For many, JRS Australia is the only safety-net. Many cannot access Medicare. Our clients include children, women and men living in Sydney.

Donating to our Emergency Cash Appeal will help us replenish our foodbank, pay for urgent medication, rent, support women out of domestic violence situations and assist people who have lost their jobs.

It's hard for everyone right now, but together, we can make it through COVID-19.

- \$40 feeds a single adult for one week
- \$70 feeds one family for a week
- \$350-\$500 pays for a week's rent

To help, please call (02)9356 3888 or email: [jrsreception@jrs.org.au](mailto:jrsreception@jrs.org.au) or click the link above this post.

*Pictured: a donation to our foodbank. This food will be delivered to people seeking asylum and refugees.*



LIKE IT. SHARE IT. AND FINALLY, THANK YOU FOR STANDING WITH PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM AND REFUGEES