

The Good News

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The Catechetical Newsletter of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Monday, April 9, 2007

The Readings for This Sunday

- Second Sunday of Easter
- Sunday, April 15, 2007
- First Reading: Acts 5:12-16
- Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24
- Second Reading: Revelation 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19
- Gospel: John 20:19-31

Power Verse to Memorize

Memorize the following verses from this Sunday's Second Reading:

Revelation 1:17-18. ¹⁷ *Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last,* ¹⁸ *the one who lives. Once I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever. I hold the keys to death and the netherworld.*

The New American Bible, (Nashville, Tennessee: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) 1997.

Weekly Scripture Reflection

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Use these reflections to help you prepare for Mass this Sunday. You can use it on your own, with your family, with a prayer partner, or in any group setting.

Summary of the Gospel:

Ever heard something so unbelievable that you couldn't just take it on faith, you had to have proof? Maybe it was a sports score, or a friend getting a great job, or someone finally getting a date! Have you ever had anyone tell you that a deceased loved-one was alive again? Well, if you did, you'd probably want some proof, wouldn't you? You would have difficulty believing that to be true for one simple fact: We have never experienced a dead person coming back to life again. This brings us to our Sunday Gospel reading. As we read and pray over this passage, we must understand it in light of the fact that the disciples had just recently seen Christ's death and apparent defeat on the Cross. Just when they thought they were with someone special, He was taken from their midst in brutal fashion. The people in Jesus' time didn't just see crucifixion as an instrument of death, rather, they saw it as complete rejection by God: Only a sinner would die in such a horrible fashion. This brings us to Easter. We can only imagine the reactions the disciples had in seeing the risen Lord: No doubt they cheered and rejoiced as never before seen. This passage shows us the reality of the Resurrection: Jesus actually

talked with His disciples, and was physically touched by them. The Resurrection was real, and it radically transformed the lives of each disciple, to the point that they were willing to die for Christ. Of course, there was one Apostle who was absent the first time Jesus appeared to the disciples: St. Thomas the Apostle. We'd like to know what St. Thomas was doing, but we are not given that information. He wasn't there, and Jesus used his absence to teach us something important about faith. Jesus talks about the importance of believing without seeing, and how blessed we are for believing, even though we don't physically see Jesus. Unfortunately, because St. Thomas didn't believe at first, he is often referred to as the 'Doubting Thomas' because he wouldn't believe the testimony of the other disciples. St. Thomas' reaction is perfectly legitimate: He had no reason to believe in the Resurrection. (And don't forget, the Church refers to St. Thomas not as 'doubter' but as 'Martyr'.) Indeed, St. Thomas' life ended in death for Jesus. The bottom line to this entire Gospel is St. Thomas' declaration about Jesus' identity: My Lord and My God! This statement is ultimately meant for each one of us to make, as we look on Christ in love and faith and say to the world that He is truly alive and in love with each of us. May we have the grace to live as St. Thomas did, giving our lives completely for Christ each day, responding with complete faith and trust in the Resurrected Christ.



Discussion Questions based on this Sunday's Gospel:

1. What does St. John teach us in this passage about the physical characteristics of Jesus' resurrected body? List as many properties as you can.
2. Given the cruelty of Jesus' death, describe the reactions and joy of the disciples as Jesus showed Himself to them.
3. How is your faith similar and/or different to St. Thomas, who doubted the Resurrection?
4. Access the Sunday Readings at: <http://www.usccb.org/nab/041507.shtml>.