Do not fear: I am with you; do not be anxious: I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you.

~ Isaiah 41:10
Get Real!

Those of us who flatter ourselves that we have a “realistic” view of the world may listen to the first reading today and say, “Get real!” when we hear Luke’s account of the early, Elysian days of the Christian movement. All seems to be rosy, lots of wonders are performed, everyone shares selflessly, they eat together in “exultation,” and the Lord added to their numbers? Well, who wouldn’t be attracted to a group like this? From the wind that swept through the upper room at Pentecost as the Spirit of God blew over the face of the waters in Genesis, and the fire that appeared over each disciple as the light appeared at the dawn of creation, Luke’s intent in Acts is to show a new creation, a restoration of creation’s original goodness through the working of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who continues to make us into the Body of Christ. We may occasionally, like Thomas in the Gospel, say, “Get real!” but our ultimate reality in the Spirit is to work continually to make our Christian community a new creation, one in which others will find God’s joy and beauty.

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Readings for the Week

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<tr>
<td>Tuesday:</td>
<td>Acts 4:32-37; Ps 93:1-2, 5; Jn 3:7b-15</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Acts 5:17-26; Ps 34:2-9; Jn 3:16-21</td>
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<td>Thursday:</td>
<td>Acts 5:27-33; Ps 34:2, 9, 17-20; Jn 3:31-36</td>
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<td>Friday:</td>
<td>Acts 5:34-42; Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14; Jn 6:1-15</td>
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<td>Saturday:</td>
<td>1 Pt 5:5b-14; Ps 89:2-3, 6-7, 16-17; Mk 16:15-20</td>
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<td>Sunday:</td>
<td>Acts 2:14, 22-33; Ps 16:1-2, 5, 7-11; 1 Pt 1:17-21; Lk 24:13-35</td>
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Saints and Special Observances

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Sunday: Second Sunday of Easter (or Sunday of Divine Mercy); Julian Calendar Easter</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday:</td>
<td>St. Anselm; Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day)</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Administrative Professionals Day; Earth Day</td>
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<td>Thursday:</td>
<td>St. George; St. Adalbert</td>
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<td>Friday:</td>
<td>St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen; National Arbor Day</td>
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<td>Saturday:</td>
<td>St. Mark</td>
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Today’s Readings

First Reading — All who believed were devoted to the teachings of the apostles, the communal life, the breaking of the bread, and prayer (Acts 2:42-47).
Psalm — Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting (Psalm 118).
Second Reading — God has given us an undiminished inheritance, safeguarded for us in heaven (1 Peter 1:3-9).
Gospel — The risen Christ comes to his disciples with peace and the Spirit. The absent Thomas doubts (John 20:19-31).


Our Sunday bulletin is an important way for us to communicate with you, especially during these days of the Coronavirus pandemic. It might be the only way that we can reach some of you. Every bulletin that you receive is paid for through the generosity of the businesses that you see advertised on the back cover. Most of these advertisers are members of our local community, and many belong to our parish. We urge you to think of them when you decide to have a meal or other item delivered to your door. Tell the business owners that you appreciate their support of our parish through their advertisements in the bulletin. This is one small way that we can work within our own community to weather the challenges that we face. Together we can help each other make it through.

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Poor Thomas. Singled out from among the disciples because he refused to believe what they were telling him—that they had seen, in the flesh, their friend and their Lord, Jesus Christ. Can any of us really blame him? All of the disciples were terrified, crestfallen, hiding. But what of Thomas? Just where was he when Jesus appeared the first time to the group huddled in fear? He had gone “out”—out of the community where his faith had life. Maybe this was actually a blessing for Thomas and not the curse associated with the “doubting Thomas” moniker bestowed on him by tradition. Oh, the divine mercy of the Lord! Could Thomas be the forerunner of all of us who come in fragile hope and uncertainty to the Christian community, so beautifully described in the reading from the Acts of the Apostles? Could Thomas be an ultimate exemplar of the faith described in the First Letter of Peter?

**You Should’ve Been There!**

Most of us have had the misfortune of missing something important simply by being absent, and then hearing about what happened. In today’s reading, unique to John’s Gospel, Thomas is the only apostle who was not around when Jesus appeared to his friends for the first time after his death and resurrection. They were frightened and grieving, not knowing what would happen to them. Remember, they found themselves to be fugitives, seemingly guilty by association with a criminal executed by government officials. Suddenly, Jesus was with them, beaming peace and mercy to his fragile followers. What joy! What a shock, too! We will never know why Thomas had left their hiding place. All we know is that he returned to wild stories about Jesus being alive after dying a brutal death. He must have thought that the other apostles in their grief had a shared delusion of what they wished were true. When Thomas finally saw Jesus, he gave what is considered the most profound profession of faith: “My Lord and my God!” In his tender mercy, Jesus ministered to Thomas by helping him to see for himself.

We Walk By Faith

But what of us? The early Christian community could only trust the words of these same apostles, the ones Thomas couldn’t believe, when they preached Jesus Christ risen from the dead. Who could believe what they said? The Holy Spirit, breathed upon the disciples in that first encounter, emanated so powerfully from them that they were able to convene seemingly utopian communities of faith. Filled with “divine mercy,” their lives became an evangelization to the world. And this is how we too are sent out, like the disciples, filled with the Holy Spirit and bearing the Lord’s peace and mercy to a troubled, suffering world. The wounds of Jesus are very real today in the needy and broken. May we always work to bind up those wounds wherever we find them.


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