



St John Boste Parish, West Durham
Esh, Esh Winning, Langley Park and Ushaw Moor

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Please telephone the Chaplain if you have someone in hospital who would like a visit.

Second Sunday of Easter: 19 April 2020



Thomas: The following text is the gospel for this Sunday. The background to this passage is that two days earlier Jesus had been put to death by crucifixion and, to make sure that Jesus was dead, the soldier pierced Jesus' side with a lance. This left a wound in Jesus' side as well as the nail marks in his hands and feet. His followers were terrified that the authorities might now come to arrest them, so they locked themselves away in a room, hoping not to be discovered. The disciples are both in mourning and in fear. Now I invite you to read the passage slowly, in a gentle unhurried way and, as you read, try to do two things: first, imagine you are actually present in this scene and notice all that is going on around you in the story; second, keep an eye on Thomas. Take note of how Thomas reacts, and notice all that he says. After reading it you may wish to write down any thoughts, anything that struck you Okay, now let's read the passage:

'In the evening of that same day [the day that Jesus was raised] 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 I am 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 in 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 do not see and yet believe." There are 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.' (Gospel of John 20: 19-31)

Okay, so what thoughts did you have about this story? What did you notice about Thomas? What were *your* thoughts before I offer some of mine.....? Well, for me, the first thing is that there is definitely something 'different' about Jesus after his resurrection. Why? Because Jesus 'came into the room and stood among them'. Yet the door was closed! Jesus seems no longer to be restricted by space or time. A second thing is that Jesus deliberately showed them his wounds. Jesus may be 'risen' but vulnerability is part of who Jesus is. As Christians today we too are vulnerable; we don't have all the answers, and we can be hurt. Perhaps it is how we *deal* with vulnerability that gives witness to others. A third thought is that during this time of the coronavirus the very last thing we should do is to *breathe on people*. Our breath conveys what we have within us. Hopefully, not a virus but a depth of goodness. Jesus breathed on his followers to share the essence of who he is, he shared with them the 'spirit of God'. Finally, Thomas... He discovered the truth about Jesus later than the others but, ultimately, it doesn't matter *when* we come to faith or when our faith becomes 'real'. The significant thing is that when it does, it can transform our lives.

Recently deceased:

Billy Donnelly (Langley Park). Billy's funeral will be on Friday, 24th April.
 Tom McKenna (Esh Winning). Tom died on Thursday morning, his Funeral will be on Wednesday 29th April.
 May they rest in peace.

Anniversaries this week:

St Joseph's, Ushaw Moor: John Burke, William Gardiner, Tom Boyle, Lee Routledge, John Dodd, Peter Martin, Fr Michael Shelley, John Dodds, Edward Manford, Joseph Towns.

Our Lady Queen of Martyrs: Tommy Patterson, William Quinn, Janey Slevin, Norah Barrigan, Peggy Hughes, Alice Smith, George Smith, Peter McGinn, Mary Heffernan, Sheila Collinson, Joe McGinn, Sarah Ann Doyle. Fr Charles Fortin, Michael Corrigan, David Stephenson.

St Michael's: Mary Jane Armstrong, Arthur Rowntree, Katie Moralee, Frank Steel, Patrick Sherry, May Johnson, Arthur Facey.

2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Prayer for a Pandemic

May we who are merely inconvenienced
remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors
remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home
remember those who must choose between preserving their health
or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close,
remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips
remember those that have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market
remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home
remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country, let us choose love.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other, let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbour.

Amen



'The God who Speaks':

Although we are not gathering in our churches or meeting for any bible study, we can still take time to read and to ponder the passages from the bible. Today's gospel is above and this Easter time can provide the perfect opportunity to read the Acts of the Apostles which tells us about the hopes and the struggles in the lives of those early Christian communities.

Gathering for prayer: Each day quite a few of us are stopping to pray together at 12 noon. Not 'together' as in the same room, but 'together' insofar as we are linked together in spirit. Do feel free to join in each day at 12, from your armchair or wherever you choose. Perhaps you pray for 3/4 different people each day, or perhaps one of the psalms, or perhaps just some time of quiet prayer. You choose! Also, I am back to the beginning of my parish address book, praying for each of you individually.



Daily readings and Morning and Evening

Prayer: <https://us.magnificat.net/free>

Mass and prayer available online:

<https://mass-online.org/daily-holy-mass-live-online/>

Hospital visits: The University Hospital of North Durham has suspended visiting of patients, with limited exceptions for children's wards, maternity wards and end-of-life patients. However, the Catholic Chaplain is still able to visit patients, and to bring them Holy Communion and the Sacrament of the Sick. If you know of a patient who wishes for a visit from the Catholic Hospital Chaplain, please inform Fr Paul Tully on 01388 818544 or frpaultully@outlook.com

Facebook page: We have set up a Parish Facebook page. If you are interested in being part of this then the name of the Facebook Group is "St. John Boste Parish Community".

Food bank: Our food bank reserves are disappearing because of our being unable to go out. So how can we continue to help? We are asking people who normally donate food to donate money instead using our website durham.foodbank.org.uk and clicking on the Donate Now button. Alternatively, for those without internet access, you can send a cheque made out to **Durham Foodbank** and sending to our head office at: Mile House, Bridge End, Chester le Street, Durham, DH3 3RA. Thank you.

Your memories: I mentioned how, when I lived in Newcastle, 'Age Concern' invited older people to write down their memories from childhood. I suggested that while we are spending rather more time in our houses, we might like to write down our memories from childhood and, maybe, share these later. Joyce has mentioned her memory of outside toilets with newspaper hung on a string on the back of the door - and a candle burning in winter to prevent the toilet freezing! Colin mentioned moving to a new house with a garden and, as a child, being given some garden tools. He also remembers the family going into the Anderson shelter in the garden during air raids. Any more memories? Try to write them down as a story!

Walsingham National Shrine: Mgr John Armitage is to lead an 8 day retreat from Walsingham beginning this Sunday after Compline ('Night Prayer') at 8.00pm. It will finish on Sunday, 26th April. Part of this will include 20 half hour videos shown at 10.30am and 4.00pm each day. For details of this online retreat check: www.walsingham.org.uk

Divine Mercy: This second Sunday of Easter is also commemorated as 'Divine Mercy Sunday' when, as it were, the Divine Floodgates of Heaven are wide-opened and Jesus offers us the total forgiveness of all sins. You can google this

Thoughts... I 'd be very happy to hear peoples' thoughts about the Scripture readings each week....!