

Sunday, April 27, 2025 – Second Sunday of Easter

First Reading: Acts 5: 27-32

What are some of the strongest evidences of the resurrection of Jesus?

Multiple eyewitnesses

1 Corinthians 15: 6 – Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died.

The first people recorded as witnesses were all women

Matthew 28: 1 – After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

Mark 16: 1 – When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome brought spices, so that they might go and anoint him.

Luke 24: 1 – But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they (identified in verse 10 as Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and other women) came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared.

John 20: 1- Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.

The changed lives of the disciples – people would not be willing to die for something that they knew was a lie

Acts 5: 27-28 - They had them stand before the council. The high priest questioned them, saying, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man's blood on us."

29-32 - But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority. The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him."

How else could you account for the tremendous change in Peter from the night of Jesus' arrest and trial?

Second Reading: Revelation 1: 4-8

4 - John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

Notice what John is saying to comfort and strengthen these seven churches. How are his words a source of comfort and strength for you?

4 - Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come

5 - And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

5-6 - To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

7 - Look! He is coming with the clouds.

Daniel 7: 13 – I saw one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He came to the Ancient One. To him was given dominion and glory and kingship.

8 – “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

Gospel: John 20:19-31

19 - 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

*The disciples were under self-quarantine – like we were for way too long during COVID
In that kind of situation what did Jesus do for them?*

Verse 19 – He gave them His presence – He came and stood among them

Verses 19 and 21 – He gave them His peace - “Peace be with you”

Verse 20 – He gave them unmistakable evidence of the resurrection – He showed them His hands and His side

Verse 21 – He gave them a renewed sense of purpose and a calling – “As the Father has sent me, so I send you”

Verse 22 - He breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit”

Verse 23 – He gave them authority – “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained”

24-25 - 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.”

*We have given Thomas (so called Doubting Thomas) a bum wrap
John 11: 16 – “Let us also go, that we may die with Him”*

26 - 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.”

The doors were shut, but this time it does not say that the doors were locked

27-28 - 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!”

*It does not say that Thomas actually did what he had said he would need to do.
But he did call Jesus, “My Lord and my God.”
Thomas is the first disciple recorded as calling Jesus God.*

The Christians in India and Pakistan trace themselves back to Thomas.