

FIRST READING – B 2 EASTER

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

The whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul,
and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions,
but everything they owned was held in common.

With great power the apostles gave their testimony
to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus,
and great grace was upon them all.

There was not a needy person among them,
for as many as owned lands or houses
sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold.
They laid it at the apostles' feet,
and it was distributed to each as any had need.



PAUSE for **THREE** seconds
then look up at the people
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING – B 2 EASTER

A reading from the first letter of Saint John.

Pause - and look up at the assembly

Beloved:

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ
has been born of God,
and everyone who loves the parent loves the child.
By this we know that we love the children of God,
when we love God and obey his commandments.
For the love of God is this,
that we obey his commandments.

And his commandments are not burdensome,
for whatever is born of God conquers the world.
And this is the victory that conquers the world,
our faith.

Who is it that conquers the world
but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?
This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ,
not with the water only but with the water and the blood.
And the Spirit is the one that testifies,
for the Spirit is the truth.



PAUSE for **THREE** seconds
then look up at the people
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING – B 2 EASTER

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord

It was evening on the day Jesus rose from the dead,
the first day of the week,
and the doors of the house where the disciples had met
were locked for fear of the Jews.
Jesus came and stood among them and said,
“Peace be with you.”
After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side.
Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.
Jesus said to them again,
“Peace be with you.
As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”
When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,
“Receive the Holy Spirit.
If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them;
if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”
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.”
After eight days 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.”
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!”



GOSPEL READING [CTD.] – B 2 EASTER

Jesus said to him,

“Have you believed because you have seen me?”

Blessed are those who have not seen
and yet have come to believe.”

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples,
which are not written in this book.

But these are written so that you may come to believe
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,
and that through believing you may have life in his name.



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

Reading I: Acts 4:32-35

Each year readings from the Book of Acts replace Old Testament readings during the Easter season. These readings show the continued work of the risen Christ in his Church.

This passage features two aspects of the life of the new community: the sharing of all things in common and the apostles preaching of the resurrection with great power (*dynamis*, a word that calls attention to the charismatic nature of the early Christian preaching).

This section is anticipated by the picture of the life of the earliest community given in [Acts 2:42-47](#). Indeed, there is something to be said for the view that the author has combined two different accounts of the same thing from two different sources.

As we pointed out in series A, this so-called early Christian communism was not based on an economic doctrine but was a spontaneous expression of Christian *agape*, necessitated by the move from Galilee to Jerusalem.

In New Testament times it was not treated as a law for all the churches. Paul gave the same principle a different expression in his collection for the Jerusalem church.

Some centuries later Benedictine monasticism was yet another expression of *koinonia*.

But whatever form it may take, in any given society there must always be some expression of this principle in the life of the Christian community if it is to retain its integrity.

Responsorial Psalm: 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

We have said before that Psalm 118, with its reference to the rejection of the stone and its subsequent elevation to be the chief cornerstone, was perhaps the earliest Old Testament passage that the primitive community applied to the death and resurrection of Christ.

It was the basic Old Testament passage for the “no-yes” interpretation of the death and resurrection: the death of Jesus as Israel’s (and all humanity’s) no to Jesus, and the resurrection as God’s vindication of him, his yes to all that Jesus had said and done and suffered during his earthly life.

Reading II: 1 John 5:1-6

This reading overlaps with the traditional epistle for the old Low Sunday, which was 1 John 5:4-10. By beginning with verse 1, the reading latches on to the paschal theme of baptism: “Jesus is Christ (Messiah)” was a primitive baptismal confession, and it is in baptism that believers become children of God.

This carries with it the responsibility to love God and neighbor. Then, in the typical “spiral” style of the Johannine school, the author reverts to the theme of baptismal rebirth and adds a new point, namely, that through baptism we overcome the world.

“World” in Johannine thought means unbelieving human society organized in opposition to God and subject to darkness, that is, sin and death. The writer then makes the tremendous statement that Christian faith overcomes the world.

As he immediately makes clear, the faith he is talking about is not a dogmatic system but an existential trust in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the revelation of God’s saving love. Such faith points beyond itself to its object—the saving act of God in Christ. That is the real victory that triumphs over unbelief.

This point is reinforced by the final paragraph, the perplexing passage about the three witnesses: the Spirit, the water, and the blood. A clue here is that the statement has a polemic thrust—it refutes those who say that Jesus Christ came by water only, not by water and blood.

“Came by water” is probably a reference to Jesus’ baptism: “came by blood,” to his crucifixion. There were false teachers in the environment of the Johannine Church who asserted that Christ was baptized but not crucified.

This may refer to a Gnostic teaching that Jesus was a mere man on whom the divine Christ descended at his baptism, then left him before his crucifixion. A modern analogy would be those who base their whole theology on the incarnation and ignore the atonement.

Gospel: John 20:19-31

The traditional Low Sunday gospel is used every year on the second Sunday of Easter. It contains two appearances.

The first is that to the Twelve, a tradition that goes back to 1 Cor 15:5 and is developed in various forms in Matthew, Luke, and here in John 20. Perhaps the appearance to the seven disciples in John 21 is another variant of the same tradition.

Luke and John 20 locate this appearance in Jerusalem. Matthew (see Mark 16:7) in Galilee, while in 1 Cor 15 no locality is given. Galilee seems to be the earliest tradition of its location, though this is much disputed.

The second appearance, resolving the doubt of Thomas, is peculiar to John and represents a manifest concern of the subapostolic age—how is it possible to believe in the risen Lord if one has not seen him? The answer is that even to see him is no guarantee of faith (consider Thomas).

Even the disciples had to make the leap of faith when they saw him. It is therefore possible for those who have not seen him to make that same leap.

This does not mean that seeing the Lord was not necessary for the original witnesses. They had to see him precisely in order that they might become witnesses, and through their witness enable those who had not seen him to believe.

Reginald H. Fuller