

FIRST READING – C EASTER 2

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Many signs and wonders were done among the people through the Apostles.
And the believers were all together in Solomon's Portico.
None of the rest dared to join them,
but the people held them in high esteem.
Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord,
great numbers of both men and women,
so that they even carried out the sick into the streets,
and laid them on cots and mats,
in order that Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he came by.
A great number of people would also gather from the towns around Jerusalem,
bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits,
and they were all cured.



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

The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING – C EASTER 2

A reading from the book of Revelation.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

I, John, your brother
who share with you in Jesus
the persecution and the kingdom and the patient endurance,
was on the island called Patmos
because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.
I was in the spirit on the Lord's day,
and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet
saying, "Write in a book what you see
and send it to the seven Churches."
Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me,
and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,
and in the midst of the lampstands
I saw one like the Son of Man,
clothed with a long robe
and with a golden sash across his chest.
When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.
He placed his right hand on me, saying,
"Do not be afraid;
I am the first and the last,
and the living one.
I was dead, but see, I am alive forever and ever;
and I have the keys of Death and of Hades.
Now write what you have seen,
what is, and what is to take place after this."

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



The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING – C EASTER 2

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!”

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 5:12-16

Here is a vignette of the apostles' ministry in the early community after Pentecost. It shows the power of the risen Christ at work in his Church. The apostolic preaching is not mentioned here, but there are never signs and wonders without the proclamation of the word.

The phrase "were added to the Lord" is very striking. New converts were "added," that is, they were brought into an already existing community. They did not hear the message and get together to form a community of their own; the community was already there.

And they "were added"—a reverential passive denoting that it was God who added them; it was not the Church that added new members. The new converts did not become members on their own, but God translated them into the redeemed community.

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

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 Christ's death and resurrection.

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 humankind'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: Revelation 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19

This is the opening vision of the Apocalypse, in which John the Seer sees the risen Christ and receives the messages for the seven churches. Some have held that this vision was a continuation of the post-resurrection appearances.

It is true that the language of the vision is used about the original appearances (1 Cor 15:3-8), and that in the earliest tradition the appearances were appearances "from heaven" (Paul; Mark; Matt 28:18; John 21) rather than massive apparitions of a Christ still on earth, as in the later tradition (Luke 24; John 20).

But Paul (1 Cor 15:8) is emphatic that the appearance to himself on the road to Damascus was last, not only in date but as a matter of principle.

Paul himself had later visions of the risen Christ (2 Cor 12:1-4; note that there he pictures himself as being transported to heaven, rather than the risen Christ as appearing from heaven upon earth). Moreover, the resurrection appearances were revelations that formed the Church and gave it its mission in the world.

Subsequent visions, like those of Paul in 2 Cor 12:1-4 and of John the Seer in our reading today, only continue what was begun at Easter. The auditory element here repeats, but does not add to, the original Easter revelations: Christ reveals himself as alive out of death.

Gospel: John 20:19-31

This, the traditional Gospel for this Sunday, describes two appearances: to the disciples on Easter evening, which appears in various forms in Matthew, Luke, and here; and to Thomas a week later, which is peculiar to John.

The element of doubt, which characterized the appearance tradition almost from the beginning and which proves that the appearances were not merely wish-fulfillment, has here been expanded for apologetic purposes, enabling the risen One to establish his identity.

The earlier tradition had pictured the risen One in more spiritual terms; this later emphasis on the physical reality of the risen body preserves the truth of the identity amid-change between the earthly Jesus and the resurrected One.

John, however, has given this story his own twist by taking up a concern of the later Church. How could a person believe in the risen One without having received an appearance? Answer: Seeing him is no guarantee of believing.

Even disciples had to come to faith when they saw him; so those who have not seen him can still have the blessedness of faith through believing the testimony of the first witnesses.

Reginald H. Fuller