



SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

FIRST READING: Acts 2:14a, 22-32

A reading from Acts.

^{14a}Peter, standing with the eleven,
raised his voice and addressed ¹the crowd ²:

²²“Fellow Israelites, listen to what I have to say:
Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God
with deeds of power, wonders, and signs
that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—

²³this man, handed over to you
according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God,
you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law.

²⁴But God raised him up,
having released him from the agony of death,
because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.

²⁵For David says concerning him,
‘I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken;
²⁶therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
moreover, my flesh will live in hope.
²⁷For you will not abandon my soul to Hades
or let your Holy One experience corruption.
²⁸You have made known to me the ways of life;
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’

²⁹“Fellow Israelites,
I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David
that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

³⁰Since he was a prophet,
he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him
that he would put one of his descendants on his throne.

³¹Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying,
‘He was not abandoned to Hades,
nor did his flesh experience corruption.’

³²“This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.”

Word of God, word of life. or The word of the Lord.

FIRST READING *Hades = HAY-deez*

The first readings in the weeks of Easter come from the story of the early church in Acts, not from the Hebrew Scripture (Old Testament). Here Peter interprets the words of King David in Psalm 16 as having reference to the Lord Jesus and anticipating the resurrection. The text demands from the reader a sense of wonder, a sense of awe.

PSALMODY: Psalm 16

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 1:3-9

A reading from First Peter.

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
By his great mercy he has given us a new birth
into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead
⁴and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading,
kept in heaven for you,
⁵who are being protected by the power of God
through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
⁶In this you rejoice,
even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials,
⁷so that the genuineness of your faith—
being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—
may be found to result in praise and glory and honor
when Jesus Christ is revealed.
⁸Although you have not seen him, you love him,
and even though you do not see him now,
you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy,
⁹for you are receiving the outcome of your faith,
the salvation of your souls.

Word of God, word of life. *or* The word of the Lord.

SECOND READING

This text is only four sentences long. It is compact and complex. Reading it aloud (more than once) in preparation for the liturgy is essential. The words carry a message of lasting hope. In a sense they are an effort to keep Easter alive in the consciousness of the faithful, even amid difficult days. The reader will do well to take time with the text, taking advantage of every period, comma, and semicolon to make the meaning clear. Give each thought adequate opportunity to sink in.

GOSPEL: John 20:19-31

The holy gospel according to John.

¹⁹When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.”

²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

²¹Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

²²When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

²⁴But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.

²⁵So 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.”

²⁶A 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.”

²⁷Then 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.”

²⁸Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”

²⁹Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book.

³¹But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

The gospel of the Lord.

GOSPEL

Caution: Rushing this story will diminish its impact. The story stretches over a full week. Help the hearer to feel the passage of time. Provide significant pauses between Jesus’ word of peace, his breathing on them (verse 22), and his invitation to Thomas (verse 27). The summary paragraph (verses 30-31) will helpfully be separated from the narrative by a healthy pause as well.