

We celebrate God's mercy today—that gift of compassionate forgiveness that is offered to all. For generations people had turned away from God, failing to respect the law or the prophets. Yet God sent us the Son, who took upon himself the sins of the world in order to redeem us all. Let our presence here today be a sign of our gratitude as we lift up our hearts and voices to the author of divine mercy.

As we gather together let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

Profession of Faith: Page

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (bow as we say) and by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Introductory Rite:

Greeting:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God for ever.

Blessed be God for ever.

Penitential Rite:

My brothers and sisters, to prepare ourselves for this celebration, let us call to mind our sins.

Lord Jesus, risen Son of God, your resurrection stands as the great sign of the Father's love:

Lord, have mercy

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, risen Son of God, you give us a new birth to a living hope:

Christ, have mercy

Lord Jesus, risen Son of God, you are the giver of Easter peace:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

Opening Prayer:

God of everlasting mercy, who in the very recurrence of the paschal feast kindle the faith of the people you have made your own, increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed, that all may grasp and rightly understand in what font they have been reborn, by whose Spirit they have been reborn, by whose Blood they have been redeemed.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Liturgy of the Word:

First Reading Page

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide

them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm Page

Psalm 118:1, 2-4, 13-15, 22-24

R/. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.

R/. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.

Let the house of Israel say, "His mercy endures forever."

Let the house of Aaron say, "His mercy endures forever."

Let those who fear the LORD say, "His mercy endures forever." **R/.**

I was hard pressed and was falling, but the LORD helped me.

My strength and my courage is the LORD, and he has been my savior.

The joyful shout of victory in the tents of the just: **R/.**

The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

By the LORD has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes.

This is the day the LORD has made; let us be glad and rejoice in it. **R/.**

Second Reading Page

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Peter

1 Peter 1:3-9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time. In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Page

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

John 20:19-31

Glory to you, O Lord

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. 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." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to 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 into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered

and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection on the Word:

Wonderful as the news of the Resurrection was for all the disciples, it must have been unsettling as well. They really did not fully comprehend it yet. They were still emotionally traumatized by Jesus' death. They probably felt more than a little guilty for abandoning him in his final hours. Certainly they feared that they could be next. They knew the tomb was empty and heard Mary Magdalene say that she saw him alive, but most of them are likely confused and anxious when they barricade themselves in the locked room. Jesus, knowing just what to say, greets them with "Peace be with you" (John 20:19). Even after they rejoiced with the confirmation that he was truly alive, Jesus repeats his words: "Peace be with you" (20:21). Soon Jesus will give them their mission, the power to forgive sins, and the Holy Spirit. But all that can wait. First, Jesus gives them peace.

Now that they are at peace and realize that Jesus truly lives, the disciples can concentrate on their mission. In order to devote themselves to worshiping God, celebrating the Eucharist, and spreading the Good News, they live and work together, sharing their food and possessions. Their community is idyllic, for they are continually comforted by the knowledge that they are united with the Lord and one another.

Poor Thomas. Because he was not with the others the first time, he is singled out as unbelieving. Nearly two thousand years later he is still known as "Doubting Thomas." We are all Doubting Thomases. None of us have seen Jesus in the flesh. None of us can hold up a photograph or watch a movie clip of him. None of us have a sample of his DNA or some conclusive proof of his identity. Still, we believe. For belief is not the presence of indisputable proof; it is acceptance despite its absence.

Question - Can I identify with Doubting Thomas, at times unsure of my faith? In what ways has Jesus given me peace to overcome the anxieties in my life?

Prayer of the Faithful:

We are told that God's mercy endures forever, so we rely on the infinite mercy of God as we bring forth our needs and the needs of the world.

- For the Church, that we may spread God's mercy to those most in need of it: the impoverished, the imprisoned, the chronically ill, the lonely, and the forgotten, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For leaders of nations, that they may work toward achieving true justice and lasting peace within their countries and with their neighbors, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For victims of persecution and their loved ones, especially for all those who were killed in the Holocaust, that they may be comforted in the arms of a merciful God, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all who were initiated into the Church on Easter weekend, that their witness and enthusiasm may strengthen us in our own faith, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all of us here today, that we may be inspired by the example of the early Christians and share what we have with others with exultation and sincerity of heart, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For what else should we pray? _____ let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

• For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, you have given us a new birth through the resurrection of your Son. May we share this living hope with our families, friends, and neighbors. Hear this and all the prayers we make to you and grant them through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Risen Lord.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer: Page

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Rite of Peace:

The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ's presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Communion:

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that our reception of this paschal Sacrament may have a continuing effect in our minds and hearts.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Concluding Rite:

Final Blessing:

May the Lord bless us,  protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ! **Thanks be to God.**