

Keeping Life Alive

Believing in the Resurrection gives a person cause for rejoicing. Since Jesus came out of the tomb with new life, all tombs have become wombs for those who enter them as Jesus did. We who were baptized into Christ's death have entered into the tomb to be reborn into his life. Baptism is the tomb-womb of our birth to hope, to an imperishable inheritance and to a salvation which will be revealed in all its inexpressible joy only at the end of time.

What sustains our hope in the promise of our Baptism? What helps us believe in the reality of Jesus' Resurrection and of our own? What keeps alive the love we have for him whom we have never seen?

The answer is multiple: the gift and power of grace, prayer, expressing our faith, choosing hope and love. But what sustains us in our daily activities? What keeps us faithful in fulfilling our duties? The oldest answer for Christians is community: the expression of faith in discipleship, liturgy and sacraments and in a lifestyle flowing from these. The earliest Christians "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers...[They] had all things in common..."

A believing Church is a Church eager to learn.

A parish that studies the teachings of Jesus grows in faith. All those who use the continuing education programs offered in parishes sustain not only their own faith but also the faith of all the others who attend. Although we certainly have to spend time alone with Jesus to let his message penetrate our hearts, we listen to him first in community. Jesus sent his disciples out not one by one but two by two.

Only witnesses are credible—and teachers to the extent they are witnesses. Discipleship only flourishes

APRIL 12, 2026

2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 2:42-47; 1 Peter 1:3-9;
John 20:19-31

in a Church that lives out what it learns. A Church that bears witness in action is a Church that experiences the reality of the risen life. To bear witness to the Resurrection we must live the risen life, "be intent on things above, not on things of earth" (Colossians 3:2) and show it in our lifestyle. We were baptized not only to know the truth but to make the truth credible to others by professing our faith in visible acts of prophetic witness.

A celebrating Church is a Church that experiences the joy of the risen life. Liturgical prayer, prayer offered together, the public expression of faith and commitment—this is one way to "have all things in common." We don't hoard the riches of our faith to

ourselves, to gloat over them in private; we make a party out of the gifts God has given us. The truth of the eucharistic banquet is not manifest unless it is a potluck supper. The Mass is not said by a priest for a congregation; the Mass is celebrated by a community of priests, with one who is ordained to preside. When we give ourselves "to the breaking of the bread and the prayers," we give life to one another. But we have to "devote" ourselves, not just be passively present. We are a community of priests, not of onlookers.

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faith by human contact
with the living Jesus*

Finally, like Thomas, we need to sustain our faith by human contact with the living Jesus: to see him, hear his words and feel his touch. We do this especially through the sacraments, special ways in which Jesus still ministers to us in human words and gestures. When we sin, for example, we do not silently ask forgiveness in our hearts from an invisible God and then trust that it is granted—any more than we do that with each other. A line in an old movie claimed that love means you never have to say you're sorry, but no one who loves could stand not to say it. So, when we sin, we say it in human words to Jesus present in a human priest; we hear human words of forgiveness spoken in response. All the sacraments are human encounters with the risen Jesus. When we act as sacraments, visible signs of faith, hope and love, to one another, we sustain Jesus' life in the world and give his peace.

REFLECTING ON THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

Second Week of Easter

Pray daily: Heavenly Father and God of mercy, increase in our minds and hearts the risen life we share with Christ and help us to grow as your people toward the fullness of eternal life with you. Amen.

Monday: John 3:1-8. Nicodemus said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs...apart from the presence of God.” What in your life shows others that God is with you? What shows your belief that God is with the Church?

Tuesday: John 3:7-15. Jesus said, “And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.” Nothing bears greater witness to the truth of Jesus Christ than responding to evil with love. When and how can you do this?

Wednesday: John 3:16-21. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal

life.” Spend some time absorbing the fact that Jesus loves you this much.

Thursday: John 3:31-36. “He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.” Do you believe Jesus shares his Spirit with you abundantly? How can you open yourself to receive more light and love from the Spirit?

Friday: John 6:1-15. “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?” Do you believe you have something to offer the community, some contribution which will nourish others' faith? How do you try to share your gifts with others?

Saturday: John 6:16-21. Jesus said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” What are your greatest fears? Your daily ones? How can you turn them over to Jesus in trust?

LIVING THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

As Christian: Put some visible symbol in your home or worksite as a reminder that you are living the risen, divine life of Christ; for example, holy water, a beeping watch, a white cloth.

As Disciple: Ask yourself if there is some parish Scripture study or faith-sharing group in which you could participate.

As Prophet: Change one thing in your life or lifestyle precisely as a way of sharing your faith through witness, that is, through some way of acting which makes no sense apart from your faith in Jesus Christ.

As Priest: Reexamine how you participate in the liturgy. Do you consciously take an active part as a priest? Does your body-language, posture, words and actions help others experience joy in these celebrations?

As King: Try to be a sacrament of hope to others through your words and actions. Refuse to look glum. Speak of what gives hope, not of what is depressing. Try to promote peace around you.