

## **Second Sun Easter C... Thomas**

### **Introduction**

The weekdays and Sundays of Easter Season are days of hope and joy for us who are disciples of Jesus. There are 40 days of Lent... days of repentance. There are 50 days of Easter... days of rejoicing. They remind us that we are an Easter people who together say and sing...

### **Refrain... Alleluia...**

### **I The Stories**

For us Christians Easter doesn't end at midnight on Easter Sunday. Our Sacred Scripture readings for this time of Easter Season tell our stories of Easter.

Many of the first readings tell of the early Church in the days following Jesus' return to the Father. The disciples of Jesus carry on Jesus' ministry of compassion and healing, of hope and encouragement, as their faith in Jesus developed and their numbers grew.

The Gospels of these Easter days tell us the stories of Jesus' days after his resurrection, of his appearances to his disciples, to dispel their darkness and despair, their sadness and fear...

Jesus brings them the Good News, and challenges them to now carry on his Mission in the world.

### **Refrain... Alleluia**

### **II Today's Gospel Story**

Let's look at today's Gospel... the story of doubting Thomas. We will ask, what does today's story say to us... what does it mean to us, 2000 years later?

Remember the setting of today's Gospel...

It's Easter Sunday, and the disciples of Jesus are behind locked doors... in fear and dismay.

Have you ever felt isolated, locked in fear, dread, worry, and dismay?

“What will happen to me? How will I make it?”

“How will my family survive this tragedy... this loss of a loved one, this loss of a job?”...

“How will I ever get over my questioning of my faith and trust in God?”

What tragedies have we faced in our lives?

What fears and worries bother us, even now?

How do we handle these kinds of experiences?

Do we feel like singing Alleluia?

The disciples had experienced a tragedy.

They cowered in fear, behind locked doors.

How would they go on without Him?

Suddenly Jesus appears in their midst.

What are his words?

Does he berate them for their cowardice in his time of need?

Does he accuse them and belittle them because they fled and left him alone... those who bragged they would never leave his side?

Does he rebuke them for their lack of courage for standing up for what they believed in...

for their being frightened by the crowd,

whether in the Garden or in the Chief Priest's courtyard?

Where were they when he hung for hours on Calvary?

Have you ever forsaken Jesus and failed to live up to your values and ideals?

So... Jesus comes to his disciples, through locked doors, and says...

“Peace be with you.”

“Peace be with you.”

“Peace be with you.”

Then he shows them his hands and side...

yes, it's Jesus...

the crucified one, the one nailed to the tree...

But now He lives!

And he brings forgiveness and peace to his disciples.

He assures them...

They are still his beloved, despite their weakness and sinfulness.

Jesus “breathes” on them his Spirit.

He gives to them his very own Spirit of love and courage and compassion and faithfulness...

the love between Father and Son is still theirs...  
and now in a very special way...

Jesus' Spirit is now theirs.  
He has forgiven them.  
They are still his beloved.  
Now we can sing...

### **Refrain... Alleluia**

What's that say to us?  
Despite our weakness and our sins...  
Despite our failures and our defects...  
Despite the times we have let Jesus down –  
is there anyone here who has not let Jesus down?  
Is there anyone here who has not compromised his or her values and ideals?  
Is there anyone here who has not betrayed Jesus,  
whether from selfishness, or laziness, or pandering to the foolish crowd?  
Listen to what Jesus says to you today...  
"Peace be with you."  
"I still love you."  
"I share my Resurrection victory with you."  
"I have risen, I am alive, not dead... here, today, in this Church... and I love  
*you*. You are still my beloved."

No wonder we can sing...

### **Refrain... Alleluia**

## **II Doubting Thomas**

Let's get back to our Gospel story.  
Remember the second half of today's Gospel...  
What was it about? (Ask them.)  
Doubting Thomas.  
Thomas is not in the room when Jesus came to be with his disciples.  
They tell Thomas about Jesus and what he said.  
Thomas can't believe it... it's too good to be true.  
Why?

Maybe Thomas can't believe he is forgiven.  
Maybe Thomas can't let go of his self-condemnation...

Maybe Thomas can't let go of his rationalization,  
his excuses for why he abandoned Jesus...  
Maybe Thomas has excused himself for forsaking Jesus' values and ideals...  
after all, it was Thomas' culture and cultural leaders who condemned Jesus...  
The important worldly leaders of Thomas time,  
the makers and the shakers,  
could not abide Jesus' way of life,  
Jesus' compassion and care,  
and Jesus identifying himself as God's spokesman.  
His culture told Thomas differently.  
His culture had different values and ideals.

Maybe Thomas couldn't believe that Jesus was alive now,  
because it would mean that Thomas was wrong,  
Thomas' culture was wrong,  
the leaders and opinion makers of Thomas' time were wrong,  
and Thomas would have to admit he made a terrible mistake...  
he abandoned the Truth,  
he abandoned the Goodness,  
he abandoned the Beauty of Jesus.

Have we even abandoned Jesus?  
Have we ever allowed ourselves to be seduced by the opinion shapers of our  
age...  
the people who constantly tell us, for example,  
that wearing designer clothes makes us better and more worthwhile?  
Have we ever been tempted to walk away from Jesus and his values and  
way of life,  
to follow a different path...  
a path of consumerism and selfish individualism,  
believing that being an entertained consumer was the way of truth?

The Good News of this Easter Season is that we can come back to Jesus...  
Jesus is still alive, regardless of what Discovery channel said about finding  
his bones – remember that?  
As a matter of fact, the Gospel story today tells us that Jesus wants us to be  
his disciples...  
He's chosen us and loves us.

He says to Thomas...  
come Thomas, place your fingers in my wounds, and your hand in my side.

These are the wounds I suffered for you.  
I have them with me always...  
they are the signs of my love for you.  
I still love you, Thomas  
Thomas could only reply,  
"My Lord and my God."

Then Jesus turns to look at each of us and says:  
"Blessed are you who have not seen me in this room, and yet have  
believed."

Can we believe in Jesus' victory, his Resurrection?  
Can we believe in Jesus' love for us?  
Can we accept Jesus' call to us to be his disciples in our world today... a  
world of different values?  
Can we respond, "My Lord and my God."

Jesus rejoices in our efforts to follow him.  
Jesus forgives our failures.

Can we sing the joyful response?

### **Response... Alleluia**

Conclusion...  
As we continue with this Easter Season Mass,  
Let us offer ourselves along with Jesus to our loving Father.  
Let us gratefully remember Jesus' love poured out for us on Calvary.  
Let us invite Jesus into our grateful hearts as we receive Him...  
Congratulate Jesus on his victory,  
And ask Jesus to fill you with his peace and love,  
And strengthen you to be his witnesses in our world today, following in his  
footsteps.

And let's once again sing our joyful Easter Refrain...

### **Response... Alleluia**