

## **Homily on Thomas Sunday**

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**Sunday, April 19, 2026**

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Today on this first Sunday following the glorious Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we celebrate Antipascha, which means the renewal of Pascha. Following directly after the Paschal week, it completes the most solemn part of the great feast.

This Sunday is also called Bright Sunday and Thomas Sunday. Here, in the UK you will often hear people refer to it as Low Sunday. This usually refers to the lower number of parishioners attending.

St. Gregory the Theologian wrote this about Antipascha, “The law of honouring the day of renewal is ancient and of good intent; or it would be better to say, to honour with the day of renewal a new act of goodness. But was not the first day of Resurrection, the Sunday which followed the holy and light-bearing night, the day of renewal? Why is that name given to the present day? That day was the day of salvation, and this day is the day of remembrance of salvation” (Homily 44, on the Sunday of Renewal).

We are all still feeling the warmth and afterglow of Pascha. We are all still full of joy and today we listened to that beautiful Gospel from John 20:19–31 to help keep that joy alive. The story of Christ appearing to His disciples in the locked room, and then again a week later when Thomas is finally there.

I am sure that you will agree with me that this Gospel feels so close to real life. It is full of fear, confusion, hope, doubt, and finally joy. It is a story about people who are trying their best but are quite out of their depth about what to do next.

The disciples are all huddled together behind locked doors. They are scared. They are unsure. They are trying to make sense of everything that has happened. They have heard that the tomb is empty. They have listened to Mary saying that she saw the Lord. But still they are scared and shaken.

And then; without knocking, without waiting for them to be ready. Christ enters the room.

This is one of the most comforting things in the whole Gospel. Christ does not wait for us to get our act together. He does not wait for us to be brave or confident or spiritually impressive. He comes to us right in the middle of our fear, our confusion, our locked-up hearts.

We all have those locked rooms inside us. Places we do not want anyone to see. Places we are not even sure we want to open ourselves. But Christ is not stopped by locked doors. He walks right through them.

And then what does He do? He does not tell the Disciples off. He does not say, "Where were you when I needed you most?" He does not mention their failures. He just says, "Peace be with you."

And He means it. This is not the kind of peace that depends on everything going well. This is the peace of the One who has just defeated death. This is the peace that steadies the heart. The peace that says, "I am here. You are safe. You are loved."

Then He shows them His hands and His side. He does this not to frighten them, but to reassure them. The wounds are still there, but they are no longer signs of defeat. They now are signs of love.

And suddenly the room that was full of fear becomes a room full of joy.

Then something very tender happens. Christ breathes on them and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit." This is such a gentle moment. It is like the breath that God breathed into Adam at the creation. A new beginning. A new life. A new courage.

And then He gives them the ministry of forgiveness: the heart of the Church's life. He gives them His peace so they can give it to others.

But one person is missing. Thomas was not there that first night. Nobody knows know why. Maybe he needed to be alone. Maybe he was overwhelmed by what had happened. Maybe he was grieving in his own way.

Whatever the reason, he misses the moment. And when the others tell him, “We have seen the Lord,” he just cannot take this in. He cannot accept this. This is not because he is a stubborn man, nor because he is cynical. It is because he is hurting. His heart has been broken, and he cannot bear to hope again unless he sees for himself. Thomas is not a doubter. Oh no! He is a wounded believer. And Christ understands that.

A week later, the disciples are together again, and this time Thomas is with them. The doors are still locked. They are still fearful and careful. They are still very wary. But Christ comes again. And again He says, “Peace be with you.”

Then He turns to Thomas. And this is where we see the tenderness of Christ so clearly. He does not shame Thomas. He does not say to Thomas: “Why did you not believe them?” He simply invites him and says: “Put your hand here.”

Christ meets Thomas exactly where he is. He gives Thomas exactly what he needs. And Thomas responds with one of the most beautiful confessions in Scripture: “My Lord and my God.”

This is definitely not the confession of a skeptic. It is the confession of someone who has finally allowed himself to hope again.

Then Christ says something meant for every one of us: “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” You heard right. He is talking about all of us here present.

We have not seen Him with our eyes. We have not touched His wounds. But we believe. And Christ calls that faith blessed. Precious. Beautiful.

He is not saying that our faith is second-rate. He is saying that our faith is dear to His heart.

One of the most moving things in this Gospel is that Christ, after His Resurrection, keeps His wounds. He does not erase them. He does not hide them. Instead, He offers them to His Disciples and us.

And that tells us something important. Our own wounds do not disqualify us from meeting Christ. They are more often than not the very places where He meets us most deeply.

Christ does not ask us or expect us to pretend we are fine. He does not ask us or expect us to hide our struggles. Actually, he asks and expects the opposite. He invites us to bring our struggles to Him, just as Thomas did.

The upper room in this Gospel represents the Church. The church, a place where people gather with their fears, their doubts, their hopes, their questions. A place where Christ comes and stands in the middle. A place where peace is spoken, forgiveness is given, and wounds are healed. A place where even the struggling ones, just like Thomas, are welcomed and embraced.

The Church is not a museum of perfect people. NO! It is a family of people who are learning to open their locked doors to Christ.

Thomas shows us that faith is not about pretending. Faith is about being honest with Christ. Faith is about bringing our questions to Him instead of hiding them. And when we do, He meets us with the same tenderness He showed Thomas. Thomas's journey leads him to a deeper faith than he ever had before.

Following the Ascension of Christ, the Apostle Thomas, according to Church Tradition, went to preach the Gospel in one of the furthest, most hostile, and most difficult-to-reach places of the ancient world - India- where he ended up being tortured and martyred for Christ.

So here we are, still in the joy of Pascha. And Christ speaks to each of us just as He spoke to the disciples: "Peace be with you."

He enters our locked rooms. He shows us His wounds. He invites us to touch them. He breathes His Spirit into us. He blesses our faith, even when it feels fragile. And He invites us to say with Thomas, from the heart, "My Lord and my God."

May we open our hearts to the risen Christ. May His peace fill the places where fear still lingers. May His love touch the wounds we carry. And may His joy carry us through this Paschal season and beyond.

Christ is risen. Truly He is risen.