



Sunday 16th April 2023

Parish Priest: Fr. Steven Rigo **Assistant Priest:** Fr. Martin Tanti

Parish Pastoral Associates: Sandy Starbuck & Sr. Margaret Sapsford

The Partnered Parishes of:

St. Mary's

204 Grimshaw St.,
Greensborough, 3088

Parish: 9435 1543 **Presbytery:** 7036 9329

Email: Greensborough@cam.org.au

Website: www.cam1.org.au/greensborough

Secretaries: Francesca Olofsson & Sharon Prosser

Mass Times

Tuesday to Friday: Mass 9.15am

Saturday: Vigil Mass 6.30pm

Sunday: Mass 8.00am, 10.00am & 5.00pm

Reconciliation Times

Saturday: 5.45-6.15pm before evening mass

Parish School Principal

Mrs. Marisa Matthys **Ph:** 9433 4000 **or Email**
principal@smgreensborough.catholic.edu.au

Sacred Heart & St Peter's

25 Gipson Street,
Diamond Creek 3089

Parish: 9401 6361

Email: DiamondCreek@cam.org.au

Website: www.pol.org.au/diamondcreek

Secretary: Pat Guatta

Mass Times

Wednesday & Friday: Mass 9.15am

St Peter's: 1st & 3rd Saturday 7.15pm

Sunday: Mass 9.00am

Reconciliation Times

Friday: 9.45am to 10.15am

Parish School Principal

Mr. Jim O'Sullivan **Ph:** 9438 1590 **or Email**
principal@shdiamondcreek.catholic.edu.au

St. Thomas the Apostle

251 Diamond Creek Road,
Greensborough Nth 3088

Parish: 9434 7373

Email: greensboroughnorth@cam.org.au

Website: www.pol.org.au/greensboroughnorth

Secretary: Lisa Leahy

Mass Times

Tuesday & Thursday: Mass 9.15am

Saturday: Vigil Mass 6.00pm

Sunday: Mass 10.30am

Reconciliation Times

Saturday: 9.30am to 10.00am

Parish School Principal

Mr David Delaney **Ph:** 9434 4565 **or Email**
principal@stgreensboroughnth.catholic.edu.au

THE CELEBRATION OF MASS IN OUR PARISHES



It is understandable that the Church should celebrate the octave of Easter by reading each year the episode in the Fourth Gospel where the risen Lord appears to Thomas 'eight days later' (20:19-31).

Second Sunday of Easter (Year A),

16th April 2023.

<https://www.australiancatholics.com.au/homily-notes-2-easter-year-a>

Sacred Heart, St Mary's & St Thomas the Apostle are all members of the Diamond Valley Deanery.

Diamond Valley Deanery

www.diamondvalleydeanery.org.au

Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

www.cam.org.au



Our Partnered Parishes respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri people who are the traditional custodians of this land and we pay respect to the Elders past and present.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST MARY'S

Vision Statement "To be a vibrant Christian community engaging with the world"

PARISH OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 9am-5pm, Thursdays and Fridays 10am-4pm. Please send any bulletin contributions to greensborough@cam.org.au by 2pm Wednesday to ensure inclusion in the weekend combined bulletin. Thank you



CHURCH SECURITY Group members and parishioners are reminded to check that **ALL doors** of the church and gathering space **are securely locked** and **all lights are off** when you leave after evening Masses and meetings. Thank you.

HELP WANTED FOR BAPTISM SUNDAYS Baptisms are held on the 2nd and 3rd Sundays of the month at 11.30 am. Presently there are 2 members on the team who help with setting up for Baptisms. We need a couple more volunteers to join the team so we could set up a roster for Baptism Sundays. The work involved is easy and takes approximately an hour in total.

If you are able to join the team or have any questions, please call Genny Schokman on 0424892283. We welcome any help possible regardless of age or gender.

FOR SALE: Standard Size Bar Fridge—almost new - \$70.00. Medium size suitcase with four wheels, only used a few times-\$50.00. Please contact the Parish Office on 9435 1543 if interested.

ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL AND PARISH 2023 FETE SATURDAY NOVEMBER 18TH

The St. Mary's Primary School would like to announce the return of the Fete of the year. We have over 30 volunteers already committed to bringing the Fete to life. However, we still need many more volunteers and are reaching out to the Parish for your expertise. Can you lend a hand? We have set up many teams that will report to a co-ordinator who then report to the Chairpeople team, thus making a big job much easier. All hands-on deck are needed for promoting and sourcing donations – Is this something you can help with? Do you have contacts that might provide an item or experience we can auction? We are still needing 2 more people to join our Chairpeople Team – perhaps your skills are in logistics or project management? Are you in finance? We would love your expertise to set up the logistics of funds for the day. Any help, no matter how small is appreciated. So if you can volunteer some time we would be grateful and pleased to hear from you.

Please email Lisa Arends, PA President St Mary's at: papresident@smgreensborough.catholic.edu.au

LADIES AUXILIARY NEWS:

KNITTERS can you please place knitted items in the Ladies Auxiliary Basket in the Gathering Space by 16th April. Enquiries: Maureen: 94355906. **PLANT SALE** after Masses weekend 15th/16th April

SUMMARY OF PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY, 4TH. APRIL 2023. Our opening prayer was led by Elizabeth, and given that it was Holy Week, was focused upon the stations of the cross. Upon reflecting on the different stations, we were able to reflect upon how each of them independently spoke to us, and their relevance to our lives. Following this, we were informed of the success of the recent Prep Connections night, run by Sandy. All who attended thoroughly enjoyed it. As mentioned in our last meeting, the recently published Report for the Synod enables us to draw upon, and appreciate different perspectives, whilst also looking to address some of the concerns that were raised. During our meeting, we spent a significant amount of time drawing upon the points from the report, and determining how they relate to our Strategic Plan (2020-2024). This enabled us to both refine, and refocus our goal of becoming a vibrant Christian community. Finally, the aforementioned umbrella pastoral council, consisting of members from St Thomas, Sacred Heart, and St Mary's will meet for the first time next month.

THANK YOU—The Thorley family sends a heartfelt thank you to all parishioners for all their prayers for Noah over the past few months. He is currently doing very well and we are indebted to you for your prayers and support. God reward you!



Be informed, inspired and entertained

Book of the week: A couple of kids' books (suitable for children aged 5-12). [A Child's Book of Saints](#) by Christopher Doyle. This is a beautifully illustrated book featuring 26 saints from the early Christian era up to Mother Teresa of Calcutta in modern times.

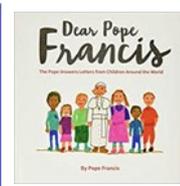
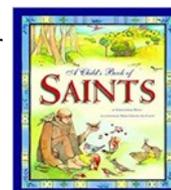


St Mary's Parish Library

[Dear Pope Francis: the Pope Answers Letters from Children Around the World](#). The children's hand-written and illustrated letters are reproduced in their own languages (with translations) and with photos of the children. The Pope's honest and respectful responses are given on facing pages.

If the Library is not open please ask a priest or sacristan to open the room and you can record your loans on the form provided. Please return in one month through the chute outside the Library.

Access to the catalogue is available at: cloud.collectorz.com/247780



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST MARY'S CONTINUED

THE PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY: The prayer shawl ministry meets in the Gathering Space 10am - 12pm on Mondays. Enquiries: Maureen Leahy—0407 687 517; Anne Fleming— 0409 234 326 .

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT: First Friday of month, after 9.15am Mass to 3pm. Spend whatever time you can. All Welcome.

SILENCE IN LITURGY God addresses us through the scriptures. But silence is what helps us discover the meaning and power of these words, letting them 'sink in' and be absorbed into our minds and hearts. In addition to the short periods of silence observed by the Reader after the first and second readings, we will again have a period of silent reflection following the Homily. **The first collection** will be taken up after this period of reflection.

CAM job opportunities—Applications are invited from suitably qualified and experienced people for the positions of:
Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

Discipleship Specialist - Marriage and Family Accompaniment
Executive Support Officer
Senior Creatives Officer

Catholic Development Fund

Finance, Risk and Administration Officer

Parish Positions

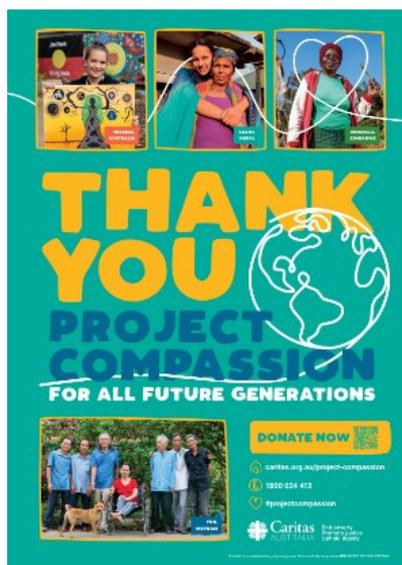
Parish Secretary – St Dominic's Parish, Melton
Pastoral Worker – St Andrew's Parish, Werribee
Parish Secretary – Holy Family Parish, Maidstone and Braybrook
Parish Secretary - St Joseph's Parish, Malvern
Liturgical & Sacramental Coordinator - Nazareth Parish, Torquay

Other Positions

Maintenance Officer - Corpus Christi
Philanthropy Lead - Carmel Impact

Further details of the above positions can be found on the Archdiocese website at: <https://melbournecatholic.org/job-vacancies>

THANK YOU!



Caritas Australia would like to **THANK YOU** for supporting Project Compassion 2023. If you still have your Project Compassion box or set of envelopes at home, please bring them back next week or visit caritas.org.au/project-compassion and donate online.

Your generosity will empower the world's most vulnerable communities to grow stronger and lift themselves out of poverty.

Together, we can help vulnerable communities face their challenges today and build a better tomorrow **For All Future Generations**.

You can donate through Project Compassion donation boxes/envelopes available from your parish, by visiting caritas.org.au/project-compassion, or by calling 1800 024 413.



PARTNERED PARISHES NEWS

*** Alpha begins 23 May, St Mary's Parish – Register now ***



Ever wanted to pause and consider the big questions about **life, meaning and faith**?

Alpha is a series of interactive sessions in a friendly, welcoming space. Participants gain an insight into the basics of the Christian faith and discuss its impact on various aspects of our lives. All are invited.



We share a meal

We watch a video

We engage in discussion

Register using the above QR code or by clicking this link <https://tinyurl.com/y87kzhj3>

SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN

SAFEGUARDING ESSENTIALS ONLINE TRAINING MODULE LAUNCHED FOR CLERGY AND VOLUNTEERS

Safeguarding Essentials is a 30-60 minute online training module for all clergy and volunteers within the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. Employees will soon be able to access the training module on Employment Hero. This accessible and engaging resource provides clergy and volunteers with foundational knowledge in relation to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable persons from abuse and harm.

This will be: an annual requirement for everyone/possible to complete individually online./At the completion of the training participants will receive a certificate of completion accessible via the training module dashboard./participants will receive email notification that the module has been completed successfully./**Training to be completed by Friday the 28th April.**

To access the online training go to: www.safeguarding.melbournecatholic.org

St Thomas the Apostle Parish

is hosting The **Alpha Parenting Children Course**
Starting Tuesday 9th May– 6th June 2023



Are you a parent, grandparent or care-giver of children aged 0-10 years?

Are you looking for practical support to strengthen your family relationships?

Over **five sessions**, the course will help you to:

- build strong foundations,**
- meet your children's needs and**
- teach healthy relationships.**

The course emphasises the role of the family, and acknowledges there is no instant recipe for bringing up children. However, some general principles apply to all families, and there is great value in discussions with others. The Parenting Children Course is based on Christian principles but designed for all people with or without a church background.

When: Tuesday evenings 7.30pm – 9.30pm Where: In your own home – Online via Zoom

Dates: May 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th & June 6th

Bookings essential by 7pm Sunday 7th May at

Trybooking: <https://www.trybooking.com/CGZJF>

For more information contact: Emilia 0418 120902 or emilia.sacchetta@bigpond.com

PARTNERED PARISHES NEWS continued

WELCOME TO OUR NEW ASSISTANT PRIEST

I am pleased to announce that a new Assistant Priest has been appointed to our Partnered Parishes. Fr. Ananda Maddineni will commence his duties on the weekend of 22/23 April and will be residing with Fr. Martin Tanti at St. Thomas'. He will be with us for about a year as the 4 members of his congregation (Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales) in Melbourne gain experience of pastoral work in Australia before they are appointed as a community to take responsibility for a number of parishes in the Archdiocese. I have asked Ananda to write a brief bio about himself by way of introduction. I am sure that you will all make him most welcome among us.

Fr. Steven Rigo

Hello dear Parishioners of St. Mary's, St. Thomas and Sacred Heart

Greetings of Peace and Joy of the Risen Lord

My name is Fr. Ananda Prasad Maddineni MSFS. You can call me Fr. Anand. I was born in India. After my secondary school, I joined the Minor Seminary of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (MSFS or Fransalians). After completion of my Novitiate, Philosophy and Theological studies, I was Ordained to the Sacred Priesthood on 21 October 1996. As a new Priest I worked in Khammam, India as an Assistant Parish Priest and Teacher at St. Francis de Sales High School. In 1998 I was sent to West Indies as a member of the pioneering team to start our Mission in St. Lucia. From 2001 to 2006 I was Assistant Parish Priest at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Jacksonville, Florida, USA; during this time I also pursued my Doctor of Ministry studies at Barry University, Miami, FL and graduated in 2010. From 2006-2012 I was the Parish Priest of Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Jacksonville, FL. I returned to India in 2012 and served as the Parish Priest of Holy Cross (2012-2015), Parish Priest of Mother of Compassion Church and Assistant Principal of St. Francis de Sales High School (2015-2019) and also Professor of Pastoral Theology at St. John's Regional Seminary. At my provincial's request I led the pioneering mission team to East Flores, Indonesia in 2019 and for the past 4 years I was the Mission Coordinator and the Parish Priest of St. Kornelius Parish in the Diocese of Larantuka, Indonesia.

I am very happy to come to Melbourne and to be assigned to the Partnered Parishes of St. Mary's, St. Thomas and Sacred Heart as an Assistant Parish Priest.

Looking forward to meet and work with you all in the service of the Risen Lord.

Fr. Anand MSFS

CHARITIES BEING CHARGED EXTRA WASTE FEES

Below is a condensed version of an email that St Vincent de Paul are asking its volunteers and concerned parishioners to send to their local member and to c.c. the Environment Minister, The Treasurer and Premier:

On 1 July 2023, the Victorian Government will stop supporting charity shops, and start penalising them with \$1.5 million in unfair extra cost burdens. This is a crisis situation for Victoria's charity shops, as well as the environment and those in need.

All the other State Governments in Australia provide protection for charities from waste levy costs, because they know charities don't create the waste, don't want the waste and that it is illegally dumped on them. All the other Australian states support charities as integral partners for a Circular Economy. Going it alone and imposing costs on charities will make Victoria an outcast state in penalising charities.

This is the impact of the Victorian Government's decision to hurt charities will have on those in need:

- ◆ \$1.5 million in electricity or gas bills that can't be paid by those who need help
- ◆ 428,571 meals that cannot be provided to Victorians who will go hungry
- ◆ 38,461 crisis calls from Victorians that can't be answered, including suicide calls

This is the impact of the Victorian Government's decision to hurt charities on the environment:

- ◆ 27,500 more tonnes of waste going to landfill every year

Why does the Victorian Government want to hurt the charity shop sector, especially as it provides the government in \$232 million in avoided costs, in providing food, shelter and other essential services to Victorians in need.

Please contact Megan Mitchem via email mamitchem@gmail.com for the full email extract and email addresses for the members in the Victorian Parliament.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT SACRED HEART & ST PETER'S



BAPTISMS: we pray for Alayna, Sophia, Isabella and Charlotte who will be welcomed into Sacred Heart community in April.

PROJECT COMPASSION: Thank you to those who have returned donations. Money boxes and envelopes can be left in the collection baskets outside the Sacristy. Receipts will be issued asap.

READERS & COMMENTATORS MEETING: *Thursday, 27 April at 7.00 pm at Sacred Heart Church*

The formation session for Readers and Commentators of St Peter's and Sacred Heart has been rescheduled for Thursday evening, 27 April at 7.00pm in Sacred Heart Church. To prepare for this session, please refer to Pope Francis' three talks on the Liturgy of the Word and your reflections to questions sent previously. For your convenience, these documents will be emailed to you again. If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact me at Margaret.Sapsford@cam.org.au to arrange another formation opportunity. Thank you.

50th ANNIVERSARY OF FAMILY GROUPS: Save the Day - Sunday 7th May. Fr Steve will celebrate Mass at 9am on this day and we would like to invite all parishioners to morning tea in the church hall afterwards. If you know any former Family Group members we would love to see them.

SENIOR MOMENTS: Wednesday 19th April Lunch & Scrabble 12pm in Parish Centre.

Wednesday 3rd May 12pm Lunch at Bridges Restaurant Hurstbridge.

Wednesday 17th May Lunch & Scrabble 12pm in Parish Centre.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL: Suggestion box in back of church or Email: ppcdiamondcreek@gmail.com

ROSTERS:

Week 18th April **Cleaning:** Breeda & Peter O'Regan

Sunday 23rd April Sacred Heart 9am

Reader: A. Pieper **Commentator:** R. McEvoy **Eucharistic Ministers:** C. Ledda, C. Garzia

Saturday 6th May St Peter's 7.15pm

Reader: B. Flynn **Commentator:** E. Gittins **Eucharistic Ministers:** Dharshanie

Our prayers have been asked for sick parishioners and friends that they may be healed & comforted during this time:

Pam Collins, Katie Pittle, Catherine Leonard, Peter Mejak, Joan Moran, Bridie Burke, Thomas Keenan, Mervyn Bourke, Jacob Draper, Kath Rickard,

Recently Deceased:

We pray for those who have died including and all those whose Anniversaries occur in the month of April that they may enter Joyfully into God's Kingdom:

Frank Laffy, Gino Ongarello, Karen Ongarello, Frank Nihill, Grace Leonard, Freda Kennedy, Alan Ridsdale, Jane Coyle, Elaine Chapman.



CATHOLIC
THEOLOGICAL
COLLEGE



Catholic Theological College

Sign up for one of 18 short, online sessions.

Engaging Your Faith – May 2023

*Theology, Vatican II, Scripture,
Spirituality, Science & Faith.*

Choose what interests you from \$25 per session.

For **more information and to register:**
ctc.edu.au/engaging-your-faith/

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST THOMAS

BAPTISMS: Please pray for Sonny, Lucy Anne, Tessa and Lucy who are being baptised later this month.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL: Next Meeting, Wednesday 19th April 7.00pm, in Parish house meeting room AGM

All welcome. Email: stthomasppc@gmail.com

PLAQUE FOR PRIESTS: At our PPC meeting in March it was agreed that we should remember Priests who have died in service while at St Thomas.

Donation for a plaque both for Fr Peter Fulton and Fr Tao Pham, if you would to donate you can drop the donation into the Parish office in a clearly marked envelope, or in the collections on the weekend.

Donations accepted up until the 30th of April. Envelopes are available in the church foyer.

THE WAY PRAYER GROUP: A Charismatic Mass will be celebrated on Thursday 20th April at St Thomas the Apostle Church, 251 Diamond Ck Rd, Nth Greensborough. The evening will commence at 7.30pm with Praise & Worship, followed by Mass and supper. All very welcome. For further details, please contact Emilia 0418 120 902 or Rose 0411 650 339.

Rosters for Weekend 22nd & 23rd April 2023

Saturday 6.00pm

Reader: P. Carty

Commentator: A. Fernando

Eucharistic Ministers: C. Leahy, S. bishop, L. Leahy

Set Up: K. Salm

Sunday 10.30am

Reader: M. Kenny

Commentator: L. Hobson

Eucharistic Ministers: B. Riordan, M. Tipping, A. Kerr

Set Up: M. Bates

St Thomas prayers are asked for the following Parishioners:

Our prayers have been asked for sick parishioners and friends that they may be healed & comforted during this time:

Miran Kasalo, John Iacobucci, Anelko Korculanin, Estelle Smooker, Tina Butera, Lilian Hobson, Peter Kranjak

We pray for those who have died including Margaret Lamb & Carmel Gillardi and all those whose Anniversaries occur in the month of April that they may enter Joyfully into God's Kingdom:

Mary Cho Nguyen, Prisca Rosario, Osvaldo Porcaro, Lina Betuna, Margaret Mc Carthy, Dino Bianchin, Bill Schultz, Brian Brown, Alessandro Sacchetta, Reg Cummins, Pat Hart, Iris Hartley, Joy Joseph, Roy Kilkenny, Anastasis Rendina, Sylvester Ellul, Rod Nettleton, Kathleen Jordan, Maria de Bartolo, Elaine Chapman, Shirley Bourke, Maria del Popolo, Rosa Alvaro, Dragan Zilic, Kaye Dixon

ARCHDIOCESE AND COMMUNITY NEWS

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER Weekend "Live Your Best Life in Love" Every relationship is a journey and the grind of everyday life can cause you to lose touch with your spouse. This weekend gives married couples the tools to keep passion alive in a gentle, nurturing environment, away from pressures and distractions of daily living. The weekend is based around Catholic values and couples of all faiths are welcome. Please check our website for more details. 28th– 30th April 2023 in Melbourne (Book early to avoid disappointment) Information/Bookings:

Phone **Mercy & James 0409 183 676** or Email: vicbookings@wwme.org.au Website: wwme.org.au

CARDINAL PELL LUNCHEON & LECTURE: Aid to the Church in Need is launching an annual George Cardinal Pell Luncheon & Lecture with the inaugural event to take place in Melbourne CBD on Sunday 21 May. The keynote speaker will be Mr David Pell, brother of the late Cardinal. For information and to register, please visit: www.trybooking.com/CGUDA



Lectionary Art and Reflection by Jenny Close. Faith works on all the levels of human experience including the sensual. Our senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell can be ways of encountering God in the world. At first Thomas refused to believe it was Jesus. He was invited to engage in a more intimate visual and tactile experience. But in the end, Thomas still required a leap of faith to recognise that Jesus was the Christ.

Second Sunday of Easter, Year A

16 April 2023

First Reading Acts 2:42-47

The faithful lived together and owned everything in common.

The whole community remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.

The many miracles and signs worked through the apostles made a deep impression on everyone.

The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed.

They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 117:2-4. 13-15. 22-24. R. v.1

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

or

(R.) Alleluia.

1. Let the sons of Israel say:
'His love has no end.'
Let the sons of Aaron say:
'His love has no end.'
Let those who fear the Lord say:
'His love has no end.' (R.)
2. I was thrust, thrust down and falling
but the Lord was my helper.
The Lord is my strength and my song;
he was my saviour.
There are shouts of joy and victory
in the tents of the just. (R.)
3. The stone which the builders rejected
has become the corner stone.
This is the work of the Lord,
a marvel in our eyes.
This day was made by the Lord;
we rejoice and are glad. (R.)

Second Reading 1 Pt 1:3-9

He has given us a new birth as his children, by raising Jesus Christ from the dead.

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy has given us a new birth as his sons, by raising Jesus Christ from the dead, so that we have a sure hope and the promise of an inheritance that can never be spoilt or soiled and never fade away, because it is being kept for you in the heavens. Through your faith, God's power will guard you until the salvation which has been prepared is revealed at the end of time. This is a cause of great joy for you, even though you may for short time have to bear being plagued by all sorts of trials; so that, when Jesus Christ is revealed, your faith will have been tested and proved like gold – only it is more precious than gold, which is corruptible even though it bears testing by fire – and then

you will have praise and glory and honour. You did not see him, yet you love him; and still without seeing him, you are already filled with a joy so glorious that it cannot be described, because you believe; and you are sure of the end to which your faith looks forward, that is, the salvation of your souls.

Gospel Acclamation Jn 20:29

Alleluia, alleluia!

You believe in me, Thomas, because you have seen me;

happy those who have not seen me, but still believe!

Alleluia!

Gospel Jn 20:19-31

After eight days Jesus came in and stood among them.

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you,' and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you.

'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.'

After saying this he breathed on them and said:

'Receive the Holy Spirit.

For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven;
for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.'

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, 'We have seen the Lord', he answered, 'Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.' Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you' he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.' Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him:

'You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.'

There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name.



Reflection by Greg Sunter

Because the focus of this week's gospel passage is usually placed on poor old doubting Thomas, we sometimes overlook the way the passage begins. The disciples are huddled in a room, 'for fear of the Jews'. Just a couple of weeks earlier they had been on top of the world. Jesus was enormously popular with the people, and the disciples, by association, were caught up in that affection. Their man, the one they had chosen to follow, was making waves and stirring the authorities – thumbing his nose at the rules. This, of course, made the disciples feel good to be around Jesus. However, in the space of just a few short days, their world had turned upside down. They'd gone from riding the crest of a wave to being utterly dumped! They were cowering in a closed up room, afraid for their lives in case those who handed Jesus over for death came for them as well. They'd already had an experience of the resurrected Jesus yet they were still hiding and afraid. Into this fear and uncertainty steps Jesus who says, 'Peace be with you'. It is a reminder of Jesus calming the storm out on the lake – in the midst of turmoil and anxiety he brings peace and calm.

Thomas has received a pretty bad rap for the last 2000 years, forever labelled as 'Doubting Thomas' because he wasn't prepared to take someone else's word for the fact that Jesus had risen. However, despite his demand for evidence, once Jesus is before him, he abandons all his thoughts about placing his fingers in the wounds and proclaims, 'My Lord and my God!' This is an absolutely extraordinary statement of faith. For the very first time, someone recognises Jesus, not as Messiah, prophet or Lord, but as God.

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