



## Lectio Divina. Second Sunday of Easter. Cycle A

*Burkina Faso (Africa), Sr. Nicole Kaboré, April 19, 2020.- “Peace be with you”.*

### GOSPEL

#### **Jn 20: 19-31**

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 disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

## COMMENTARY

### PEACE BE WITH YOU



#### Information

This passage places us in the atmosphere of a new life: The appearance of the Risen Lord to his disciples.

In the same narrative, there are two apparitions: the first takes place on the first day of the week and the second takes place eight days after in the same place.

In the first, when the Risen Jesus appears to his disciples in the cenacle, all were not present.

Let us take the four essential elements of this meeting: the gift of the Holy Spirit; the gift of peace; sending on mission and the gift of the power to absolve sins.

**Second apparition:** Jesus is more interested in Thomas who was not present during his first appearance.

## MEDITATION

- It is the evening of the first day of the week. The disciples had locked themselves in one place out of fear. When evening falls, everything becomes dark. It is the reign of darkness. Overwhelmed by the events, the disciples hid themselves in order to escape the same fate that befell on their Master. They are afraid: fear of those who killed the Lord, fear of death...

The dark incident of Friday made them forget what Jesus had told them: "The Son of Man had to suffer much, be rejected by the elders, by the chief priests and by the scribes, be put to death, and rise again on the third day." LK 9: 22.

Three days passed after that black day, which ended their beautiful company with Him for whom they had left everything. Now they are obliged to hide, but until when? The Master is no more. His absence plunges them into confusion and despair.

\*But no, it's not all over. The star that governs the day gives way to the light of the True Sun whose rays can pass through even the thickest darkness. This is the reign of Life, a new life, this third day then becomes the First Day in the history of the fulfillment of salvation. The First Born from the Dead addresses his first greetings to the messengers of the New Covenant with words of peace. This is only the beginning. No one had ever risen from the dead before Jesus.

As a new man, He no longer needs an intermediary to reach the places where His disciples were. The locks symbolize the closing of their hearts by unbelief and fear. They are broken when they come into contact with the Power of Life. Life enters into them without any barrier to prevent its presence. Not even the tomb could hold it as prisoner. The earth has returned its Creator. He is the victor and He comes to free those who are hiding in terror.

"Receive the Holy Spirit," he tells them. Jesus pours out his SPIRIT upon them, a Spirit that sets them free." This third person of the Trinity will come to dwell eternally in the Church and in the hearts of those who welcome him as Guide and Light. Mutual love of the Father and the Son, will carry all that the Son could not say to his disciples and will bring to fulfillment the mission of the Son which is to extend the reign of the Father to all humanity.

Jesus pours out PEACE on his disciples to comfort them because what happens next depends on it. Peace in the Bible refers to the fullness of life, a messianic gift par excellence. (It is mentioned 378 times throughout the Bible, 280 times in the Old Testament from Gen 15:15 to Ps 147:14;

98 times in the New Testament: including 27 times in the Gospels from Mt 5:9 to Jn 20:26; and 71 times from the book of Acts 7:26 to the book of Revelation chapter 6, verse 4).

God has guaranteed to human persons his Peace each day and even more (378 times for 365 days of the year). This is life in fullness. To all those He calls, He gives the strength to answer. His call is followed by a mission.

**THE MISSION:** "As the Father has sent me, so I send you". In inaugurating his mission, the Lord said that he was anointed by the Spirit and sent with a project as we read in Luke 4:18-19: to bring the Good News to the poor; to proclaim deliverance to the captives; to restore sight to the blind; to proclaim a year of grace".

The disciples will therefore go and announce that all this is accomplished. The victory won by his resurrection from the dead is the Good News for mankind that was deteriorating in the shadow of death. A latent mission for them, it will be confirmed by the same Spirit once the

Lord has finished preparing them by His many apparitions. He mandates them to act in His name.

**POWER:** Jesus gives POWER to His friends to deliver people from their sins and to bring back to God, the hardened hearts and wicked spirits. "All to whom you forgive sins, they shall be forgiven". Christ's death and resurrection reconciled man with himself, with his fellow men, and with God. As Redeemer, He goes so far as to give man the possibility of re-establishing the bond that can be broken by sin.

Am I truly aware of the greatness of this sacrament which restores me, reintegrates me into my family and gives me back my dignity as a child of God every time I receive it?

- Peace be with you. This is the second time that Jesus comes, eight days after his first apparition and He realizes the persistent fragility of his disciples.

The doors are locked again, a sign that their fear remains. They were always afraid of those who bring death. Once again, Life (Jesus) breaks the lock of death and removes the fear by outpouring His peace into their hearts. Thomas is here this time, he who needed a concrete sign to believe. "unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger where the marks are and put my hand in his side, I won't believe." This realism - must be acknowledged which contributed to strengthen the faith of the other disciples and ours too.

Jesus speaks directly to Thomas. He seems to be the target of this visit. Jesus allows him to touch Him. He does not remain silent, he expresses himself. Here we witness his confession of faith: "My Lord and my God. " JESUS IS GOD. For the first time, this title is recognized. In Caesarea He had been designated as the Messiah, the Son of God and not God as Thomas has just confessed. It was necessary for Jesus to walk on death as he walked on the sea in order to show His true identity to be proclaimed aloud.

"Blessed are those who believe without having seen." This remark made by the Risen One to His disciple applies to us as well. In a world where sensationalism seems to prevail over truth, it is appropriate for us, His disciples to distinguish this tendency by affirming through our faith that is real, constant and active, in the One whom we believe.

Shouldn't we improve our spiritual growth, from a faith which search for proofs to a faith proof? Jesus is now more accessible and palpable to us than He was during His lifetime with His disciples. The Eucharist puts us constantly in communion with Him. By receiving it, as the matter melts into our flesh, his divinity transforms our soul and integrates us into the sphere of the divine. It unites our humanity to his divinity so that we need not search any other pledge.

Reflecting on this Word, facing the humanity that suffers and continue to suffer, what do I really believe?

Today does the thirst for miracles slow-down my spiritual growth?

## **PRAYER**

Come, Jesus in my retreat. Break the locks of my heart by filling it with your Spirit of peace. Pierce the dark borders of my life with this same Spirit of Light.

Increase my faith in your constant presence. Make me a fearless witness of your resurrection.

## **CONTEMPLATION**

You are here Lord. I contemplate your heart open and bleeding with love. I adore you, True God and hidden presence in my nothingness. Jesus, you are God.