



Greeting,

Here we are together again on the Second Sunday of Easter at the end of the Octave of Easter or Eastertide. This Sunday is also called White Sunday, Divine Mercy Sunday, I know it as Low Sunday, likely the clearest name is Thomas Sunday used by our Eastern brethren.

The name for Sunday, this season, and even the liturgical colours used are very different from place to place, church to church, and now house to house, rich and fascinating differences. The reason for the season, however, the unifier is a constant, imperishable, undefiled, unfading, indescribable, power, wonder, blessed, he is Peace, to borrow from each of our readings today we are not going to delve into the debate of the dates and authors of these texts, we can argue about dates and doubt after **at 11 am during coffee chat and sermon discussion** with the link provided below. When introducing our unifier, our Christ, I used some of the attributes and adjectives used in all of our readings, Acts, First Peter, and the Gospel of our Lord according to John which our lectionary has placed in that order which is chronological order.

1. Acts
2. First Peter
3. The Gospel of John

I know it sounds like an aggressive feat of theological acrobatics to try and pull all three together, but we are **going** to do it, friends. Not doubting Thomas in this crowd. As I spent time with these readings that is not what I heard, not what the spirit wanted me to see, to experience. I found myself in the reading from John, I could see myself there, in the third reading and last book to be written, it brings together all the things we heard of God throughout our readings, and it brings us to The upper room, There is a feeling of the important gathers that happened there, the plans made, the joy exchanged,

The last supper, to us Eucharist.... But that was **BEFORE** We read... it was the same day that the empty tomb was discovered by Mary Magdalene the Doors are locked it says for fear of the Jews, for fear of those just outside the door. You can sense their emotions, imagine their hurried conversations, retracing every detail, No news coming in and then too much news coming in hurried conversations, speculations, misinterpretations and fear. Some short tempers, frustrations, fears, a lack of clarity all exacerbated by closeness isolation.

**Isolated**

**Fearful**

**Doubtful**

Sadly that is where I found myself in this story, our story, maybe you do too, here in a big room it could be any room, thinking of the times and moments shared, but that was **BEFORE**

Now Self Isolating with and from my colleagues and others who couldn't go home, Isolating from the world fearful who or what might come through the door and bring with them an unseen agent of harm doubtful it will ever be normal again it is no news and too much news, on tv, on our phones, streaming at us all day.

Hurried conversations, speculations, misinterpretations, and fear-mongering. The anxiety it that room must have been building, as we made our way through our readings, we can sense that,

But HOPE was also building, unexpectedly somewhere, it was building. We learned;

God is always at my right hand  
God Will NOT abandon me (FOCUS ON THAT TERM)  
God Makes known the ways of life  
God Makes me full of gladness

From our psalm we learned;  
God is our refuge  
My Good above all other  
My portion and my cup  
My counsellor  
From 1<sup>st</sup> Peter we learned God;  
Has given new birth  
The protector

Knowing this, in John 20 we read Jesus enters the locked room, his people stand there;  
**Isolated**  
**Fearful**  
**Doubtful**

That's the way I saw them, that's what I read, but to Christ, they were not any of those things, they were;  
Hopeful  
Expectant  
And Gathered

He would have seen the anxiety, but he fed into the hope and he delivers the Holy Spirit to them, to US, the sustainer, in our midst.

Just like those in the upper room, who were;  
Hopeful  
Expectant  
There gathered

The gift of the Holy Spirit means we should be;  
Hopeful  
Expectant  
Not gathered though!!!

The Word enlivened by the Spirit allows us to confidently say  
I will not be shaken  
My flesh will live in hope  
God is loving,  
at work,  
and our refuge.

We are so similar to those in the upper room, there will be doubt,  
some fear, and likely some short tempers and disagreements in this time but I pray I always know and listen for the stirring of the Spirit, with whom I am truly hopeful and expectant, even when we can't be gathered, and I pray you are too.  
Amen