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## THE BULLETIN - READINGS

8 April, Easter 2

### Collect for Easter 2

Almighty Father,  
you have given your only Son to die for our sins  
and to rise again for our justification:  
grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness  
that we may always serve you  
in pureness of living and truth;  
through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

(or)

Risen Christ, for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred:  
open the doors of our hearts, that we may seek the good of others  
and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace, to the praise of  
God the Father.

### Acts 4:32-35: The Believers Share Their Possessions

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart  
and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any

## **1 John 1:1-2:2: The Word of Life**

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life - this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us - we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

### **God Is Light**

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

### **Christ Our Advocate**

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

### **Jesus and Thomas**

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told 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 in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

### **The Purpose of This Book**

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

<p><b>Readings for 15 April, Easter 3, are: Acts 3:12-19; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48</b></p>
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### **Coping with doubt** *by Rodney Nicholson*

If we don't have any doubts, we perhaps don't have much faith

Knowing this, God gives us his Son whom we can imagine – the human face of God – but still we live with glorious mysteries. Exactly how Jesus is both fully God and fully man, just how he rose from the dead, precisely how the bread and wine are his body and blood – these are realities which we only dimly grasp. One day we shall know fully, but for now we “walk by faith, not by sight”.

That said, much of life is mysterious. As has been said, a little light-heartedly, how does a brown cow eat green grass and produce white milk? David Attenborough claims that there’s nothing more miraculous than an egg. We do not understand electricity but accept that it works. The creation of life, be it a field mouse or a baby, is mind blowingly awesome. “I only believe what I can see”, called the heckler at an outdoor Christian meeting. “Have you a brain?” came the swift reply.

So, we may not understand all that we recite in the Creed, but we know that God gave his Son to be the Saviour of the world. We know that on the third day he raised Jesus from the dead, even though we cannot grasp all the details. This is so wonderful that the Easter season in church lasts for seven weeks and our readings express different aspects of the resurrection. We may not understand everything but we know that we are eternally loved by God.

Thomas, the apostle, stayed by himself that first Easter Sunday evening, maybe through grief, and so missed out on meeting the risen Jesus, as the others did. Our faith leaks away constantly, so that we need to be with other Christians to keep our faith alive and growing. The more gatherings for prayer, study and worship we can go to, the more our faith is boosted. But every Sunday we