



## Meditation for the Second Sunday of Easter April 11, 2021

*'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.'* [John 20.22-23]

Every year on the Sunday after Easter we hear the story of Thomas, who would not take the word of his friends that Jesus had been raised from the dead. He wanted to be able to touch the wounds himself. Most of us intuitively connect with “Doubting Thomas” and even though the gospel is dismissive of his experiential approach to faith, most of us sympathize with his insistence upon empirical evidence for the wondrous tale told by his friends.

For me, the real story is not about Thomas’s doubting but about Jesus’ graciousness. He begins with words of forgiveness. He allows himself to be poked and prodded. He doesn’t get frustrated. He understands the questions and the fear that continue to fill the hearts and minds of all his disciples –especially, but not exclusively, Thomas. He doesn’t show off his supernatural powers. He doesn’t flaunt his divinity. He offers his wounded body as proof of who he is.

Jesus’ graciousness shows us what forgiveness looks like. The one who forgives and the one who is forgiven meet and recognize the pain and the wonder that they share. When Thomas exclaims, *My Lord and my God!* Jesus knows that the world has changed, that God has intervened, that he is truly alive in a new way.

*O Christ,  
You take upon yourself all our burdens  
so that,  
freed of all that weighs us down,  
we can constantly begin anew to walk,  
with lightened step,  
from worry towards trusting,  
from the shadows towards the clear flowing waters,  
from our own will  
towards the vision of the coming kingdom.  
and then we know, though we hardly dared hope so,  
that you offer to make every human being  
a reflection of your face. [Roger Shutz]*