

# SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER



## Breath of Life

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
as you once breathed life into the first  
human being,  
so now the Risen Christ  
breathes your living Spirit into us.  
May this Spirit animate every part  
of our lives.  
May we listen and look for the Spirit,  
and follow where the Spirit leads.

If our faith is shaken,  
if our joy wavers,  
if we long for signs and wonders,  
breathe your Spirit into us anew  
so that we will persevere in discipleship  
and inspire others to follow where  
the Spirit leads.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, April 19, 2020

Moving Forward



*Today's Readings: Acts 2:42–47; Psalm 118:2–4, 13–15, 22–24; 1 Peter 1:3–9; John 20:19–31.* Today's readings are permeated with joy. The disciples rejoice when Jesus appears, the early Church exults in her new life in the Spirit, and St. Peter writes of the “indescribable and glorious joy” that comes from knowing how deeply God loves us.

The readings also contain contradictions. The disciples believe in the Risen Lord because he appears to them, and in Acts we hear that the Apostles worked miracles, yet people are blessed for believing without seeing. The passage from Acts also portrays the Church as living in harmony, but other passages reveal that the Church faced internal conflicts and divisions.

St. Peter tells us that we rejoice in our salvation but will sometimes suffer because of our faith. Enduring persecution for the sake of Christ is difficult, but what about other forms of suffering? It's often difficult to integrate our experiences of pain and sorrow into our life of discipleship.

The readings celebrate the joy that arises from faith, but they remind us that faith must be strengthened. We need time in prayer for our encounter with the Risen Lord. We need time with the Scriptures, with the testimony of others who knew Jesus but who also struggled. We need a community to form and support us. Our faith will sometimes waver, but these people and practices will help us enter into the eternal joy of God's Kingdom.



## THIS WEEK AT HOME

### Monday, April 20 Reborn in the Spirit

Nicodemus doesn't understand that Jesus is bringing about the Kingdom of God. In response, Jesus speaks about the Spirit. Those who are "born from above," who receive the Spirit, become part of God's Kingdom. When the Apostles were reborn in the Spirit, they went forth to bring others into God's Kingdom. At Baptism and Confirmation, we celebrate God's gift of the Spirit, but how much do we let the Spirit work within us? Pray for the courage to live as someone who is reborn in the Spirit. *Today's Readings: Acts 4:23-31; Psalm 2:1-3, 4-7a, 7b-9; John 3:1-8.*

### Tuesday, April 21 What We Possess

Nicodemus is a leader among his people, but Jesus has far greater authority because he has come from heaven. Jesus has shared his authority with the Apostles. In Acts, we hear how converts entrust their wealth to the Apostles for distribution among the community. By giving up their wealth, people show that they have submitted themselves to Christ and his Church. They are no longer attached to material things. How attached are you to the things you own? How much would you put at the feet of the Apostles? *Today's Readings: Acts 4:32-37; Psalm 93:1ab, 1cd-2, 5; John 3:7b-15.*

### Wednesday, April 22 Faith to Share

The Acts of the Apostles reminds us that our Christian faith is not something to be kept private. We are instead to be like the Apostles and share the good news that God loves the world so much he became human. When the Apostles are imprisoned for sharing this good news, God sends an angel to free them. God goes to remarkable lengths to help us share his love with others. How can you help someone encounter God's love today? *Today's Readings: Acts 5:17-26; Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9; John 3:16-21.*

### Thursday, April 23 Brave Witness

Jesus, the one "from above" who has received everything from his Father, speaks on God's behalf and freely shares the Spirit with those who believe. Having received the Spirit, Jesus' followers continue to teach and heal in his name, despite being imprisoned, interrogated, and ordered to stop. Without their brave witness, we would never have heard the Gospel. Pray for those who risk their lives for Christ. *Today's Readings: Acts 5:27-33; Psalm 34:2 and 9, 17-18, 19-20; John 3:31-36.*

### Friday, April 24 Thy Will Be Done

Despite not having nearly enough food for the crowd, Jesus feeds everyone, and has baskets left over. It is God's will that people be fed, that they be nourished. In Acts, a Jewish leader intervenes on behalf of the Apostles, pointing out that if they are doing God's will, their work will succeed. What work are we trying to do? Does God support us, or are we acting for ourselves alone? *Today's Readings: Acts 5:34-42; Psalm 27:1, 4, 13-14; John 6:1-15.*

### Saturday, April 25 St. Mark the Evangelist

St. Mark responded to the Lord's command to "proclaim the gospel" by writing down the story of Jesus. In Mark's Gospel account, the danger of the cross looms early in Jesus' ministry. Mark seems to have composed his work for Christians who were persecuted because of their faith in Christ. Like St. Peter in his letter, Mark encourages those who suffer to remain "steadfast in faith." Although we are in a season of rejoicing, we remember that being an Easter people means we must also be people of the cross. Read some or all of Mark's account of the Gospel today. *Today's Readings: 1 Peter 5:5b-14; Psalm 89:2-3, 6-7, 16-17; Mark 16:15-20.*

