

NEW SUNDAY (FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER).

Dearly beloved:

I am sorry to inform you that I did not get a chance to communicate with you the significance of the events of Holy Week as well as those of the important readings of the period. Our busy schedule of activities at church during that time made it difficult for me to communicate with you regularly through email. Now that the solemn period of Great Lent is over, I am now able to inform you of significant church events and Bible readings during the week.

Next Sunday, April 23rd is the First Sunday after Easter or “New Sunday”. During Easter Sunday, we saw how the risen Lord Jesus appeared to Mary near the tomb. Our reading for this Sunday is about Jesus Appearing to His ten disciples, empowering them for their ministry. The doors were closed, but Jesus came and stood in the middle and said, “Peace be with you”. In our Holy Qurbana, the celebrant blesses the parishioners six times by saying, “Peace be with you”. The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus was seen by over 500 people over a forty day period and today’s reading is one of those times. Even after the disciples saw the empty tomb and heard the reports of Jesus’ appearance to the women, they were still weak in faith and fearful of being arrested by the Jewish authorities. When Jesus appeared to them He offered proofs of His resurrection by showing them the wounds of His passion, His pierced hand and side. He calmed their fears and brought them peace. Just as He gave His disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit, He breathes on us the same Holy Spirit with power, grace and strength.

St. Thomas was the last apostle to meet the resurrected Lord and he was the first to go with Him to Jerusalem at Passover time. When Jesus proposed that They visit Lazarus after receiving news of his illness, Thomas said to the disciples: “Let us also go, that we may die with him”. While Thomas deeply loved the Lord, he lacked the courage to stand with Jesus in His passion and crucifixion. He doubted the women who saw the resurrected Jesus and he doubted his own fellow apostles. When Lord Jesus reassured Thomas that he had indeed overcome death and risen again, Thomas recognized his Master, believed and exclaimed that Jesus was truly Lord and truly God. His declaration is the climax to John’s gospel. We have to leave our brains behind when we come to faith and when we come to the Church.

Through the gift of faith we too proclaim that Jesus is our personal Lord and our God. “Lord Jesus Christ, through your victory over sin and death, you have overcome all the powers of darkness – Help us to draw near to You and to trust in Your life-giving word.”

Please read the following Bible verses, in preparation for this Sunday's commemoration.

Bible readings for Sunday, April 23rd, 2006.

(New Sunday – First Sunday after Easter)

Before Holy Qurbana:

Genesis	-	41: 41-46
Ecclesiastes	-	12: 1-8
Jeremiah	-	1: 4-12
Isaiah	-	40: 9-15

Holy Qurbana

General Epistles: **I Peter** - 2: 19-25
Epistles of St. Paul: **II Timothy** - 2: 1-13
Holy Gospel: **St. John** - 20: 19-31

Next Sunday, April 30th is First Sunday After New Sunday.

With prayers,
Thomas Alex