

Pope's prayer intention for April

Universal: For doctors and their humanitarian collaborators in war zones, who risk their lives to save the lives of others.

Pope's prayer intention for May

Evangelization: That the Church in Africa, through the commitment of its members, may be the seed of unity among her peoples and a sign of hope for this continent.

BE STILL

- Take a moment to allow whatever is in your heart to rise and offer your thoughts to the loving care of the Lord today.
- Listen to '[Set your hearts on the higher gifts](#)' by Steven Warner, performed by the Notre Dame Folk Choir.

This week:

- Monday 29 April: St Catherine of Siena (Memorial)
- Thursday 2 May: St Athanasius (Memorial)
- Friday 3 May: Sts Philip and James (Feast)

Gathering prayer:

Loving God,
Allow us to draw near to you
and to sit in your presence
as we open our hearts to hear your word. Amen.

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John (20:19–31):

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you,' and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you.

'As the Father sent me,
so am I sending you.'

After saying this he breathed on them and said:

'Receive the Holy Spirit.
For those whose sins you forgive,
they are forgiven;
for those whose sins you retain,
they are retained.'

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, 'We have seen the Lord', he answered, 'Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.' Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you' he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.' Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him:

'You believe because you can see me.
Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.'

There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so

that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name.

The gospel of the Lord.

Ponder:

Re-read the text. Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) noted that in the presence of God, during a recollected reading of the text, it is good to practice *Lectio Divina*—the reading of God's word in prayer asking that it 'enlighten and renew' us. The following questions may help with this:

- Lord, what does this text mean to me?
- What is it about my life that you want me to change in response to this text?
- What troubles me about this text?
- Why am I not interested in this?
- What do I find pleasant about this text?
- What is it about this word that moves me?
- What attracts me? Why does it attract me?

Reflect:

It is hard to imagine how those early followers of Jesus must have felt. While they are in a room behind closed doors and fearful, Jesus comes to them. Jesus breaks through the wall of their fear and brings a message of peace—a message that moved their hearts from fear to joy. The message was one of being commissioned for mission, but it didn't have an immediate effect. It took another appearance and another message of peace. It took a more tangible sign: 'doubt no longer but believe'.

Perhaps the invitation for this second week of the Easter season is to reflect on how the risen Jesus appears to us. In the midst of the challenges of our lives and the world, to what is the risen Jesus calling us?

PRAY

Reflect on the words of the Easter sequence

Christians, to the Paschal Victim
offer your thankful praises!
A lamb the sheep redeems;
Christ, who only is sinless,
reconciling sinners to the Father.
Death and life have contended
in that combat stupendous;
the Prince of Life, who died, reigns immortal.
Speak, Mary, declaring
what you saw when wayfaring.
'The tomb of Christ, who is living,
the glory of Jesus' resurrection;
bright angels attesting,
the shroud and napkin resting.
Yes, Christ my hope, is arisen;
to Galilee he will go before you.'
Christ indeed from death is risen, our new life attaining
our new life obtaining.
Have mercy, victor King, ever reigning!
Amen.