

**Quasimodo Geniti (The Second Sunday of Easter)**  
**12 April 2026**  
**John 20:19-31 (Ezekiel 37:1-14, 1 John 5:4-10)**

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—Amen

The text for this morning's sermon is the Holy Gospel appointed for today from the Holy Gospel According to St. John, the twentieth chapter.

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit—Amen

+Alleluia, Christ is risen! [He is risen indeed! Alleluia!]+

Poor Thomas. All Thomas wanted is what the others got, and for that, he's been branded the doubter for all of church history. But the thing is: so should you—like Thomas—want what the others got, that is, being sure, certain, safe from deception. That's important, since “Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.” His sermons sound good, but he is a liar, rejecting the Gospel—God's Word made flesh for you, dying, rising, baptizing to save, absolving, and serving you at His Table. The devil works against what Thomas needed, namely, being flesh-and-blood certain, so he questions God's Word. The devil denies that Jesus puts you into His death and resurrection through Holy Baptism. And he denies that Jesus gives you His real, nail-pierced flesh and poured out blood in the Sacrament. Demand what Judas did. Demand to be flesh-and-blood certain.

But Thomas wasn't in church Easter day when Jesus gave flesh-and-blood certainty to the rest through His hands and feet, His pierced side. Thomas didn't hear Christ breathe His Spirit-filled breath on the bearers of His holy office: “If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of anyone, they are retained.” That's really a better rendering of what Jesus says—retaining, binding sins—not withholding forgiveness, refusing to forgive. People refuse to forgive all the time. Jesus isn't speaking of such pettiness, but of formally holding or

retaining sins against someone—in love. Forgiveness is declaring a repentant sinner free. “In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins.” But as long as a sinner is unrepentant, the pastor must say, again in love: “Though Christ paid for every sin, that sin you’re holding onto, continuing in, refusing to repent of and do better, is sin you’ve taken from Christ and made your own again. It is held against you as a debt until you pay it in full. Repent!”

That’s equivalent to what Jesus told Peter the night Peter took his feet out of Jesus’ soon-to-be-nailed-scarred hands. Jesus said: “If I don’t wash you, you have no share with me.” Peter repented at that and ate and drank the Lord’s body and blood for his forgiveness. Whenever a pastor must say: “Your sins are retained against you,” that’s meant the same way Jesus spoke to Peter that night. It’s meant to bring an unrepentant sinner to repentance. Apart from repentance and the forgiveness of sins, we have no share with Him and lose access to the Sacrament of the Altar as long as we continue to resist the Holy Spirit.

That was where Thomas was heading. He wasn’t wrong to demand the certainty Jesus gave the others, but he already *had* it—in the Word which was preached to him. So, Jesus wants you where He is giving you the same certainty. Just don’t demand it as He gave it that first Easter, or the week after. To His disciples, He visibly showed them His scars, saying: “Peace be with you.” I can’t tell you if that voice was baritone, bass, or tenor. On Patmos, John heard it “like a trumpet” or “the sound of many waters.” You and I won’t hear it until He comes in glory. But just as it was for Thomas that week, you hear Christ’s voice through those who preach and teach according to His Word. The voice of your pastor speaking Holy Absolution *is* the voice of Christ, as surely as the voice of the pastor who baptized you was the voice of Christ, as surely as the voice of the man consecrating the bread and wine is the voice of Him who instituted this meal. Even as surely as parents catechizing and forgiving their children are the voice of Jesus in the home.

Thomas had the voice of Jesus all week long, and he did not believe it. “Alleluia! Christ is risen! [He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!]” Though they told him, he did not respond as you just did. Still, it was as sure and certain as when Mary Magdelene had Jesus speaking to her in the Garden, though she mistook Him for the gardener, or when those two disciples on the road to Emmaus heard Christ telling them, from Moses and the Prophets, all the things concerning himself, yet did not recognize Him until He repeated His Maundy Thursday action and took bread, gave thanks, and broke it. It would be as surely Christ’s own voice when Thomas preached afterward, having been brought to repentance by the appearing of Jesus, who told Thomas to put His fingers into the marks of Jesus’ death for him. With that—flesh-and-blood certain—Thomas went from disbelieving to believing and confessing, “My Lord and my God!”

Jesus gave Thomas what he needed. Jesus gives you what you need in His Word and in His flesh and blood at His table. Thomas got what he demanded, but then did the same as the rest: he preached it, and blessed were all who believed without seeing. Some things are for one time only, like putting your finger into the Savior’s side. Hearing God walking in the Garden in the cool of the day was for Adam and Eve, not for you and me. Talking to God in a burning bush with unshod feet on holy ground was for Moses only, but God always works through words and signs, through what He says and what He gives. He gave Israel passage through the Red Sea on dry ground, but He gives you His new birth from above through water and the Word. He marked Israel’s sons at 8 days through circumcision, but He marks you through Holy Baptism as redeemed by Christ the crucified. He gave Israel manna and quail in the wilderness. He gives to you His body and blood in bread and wine. He appeared to Peter and the apostles, to Thomas, and to more than five hundred at one time. Last of all, as to one abnormally born, He appeared to St. Paul. And on the Last Day, He will appear in His glorified and resurrected body to you.

Until He does, you have Him in His Word and Sacraments. You have Him in His Church, baptizing, preaching, teaching, absolving, and feeding you His body and blood under bread and wine. You have Him in the liturgy, telling you exactly what He told the Apostles: “Peace be with you.” That is Christ’s own voice, and by it, with Thomas, you believe and are given what is as sure and certain as he got, by which you put your ears, hands, and mouths to the flesh and blood Jesus, confessing: “My Lord, and my God,” and believing that by Him, you are forgiven for all of your sins.

+Alleluia, Christ is risen! [He is risen indeed! Alleluia!]+

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit—Amen

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus—  
Amen