

The Incredulity of Saint Thomas (Caravaggio)
1601-1602
Oil on canvas
Sanssouci, Potsdam

Easter greetings to the members of the Boonah Catholic community and beyond on the Second Sunday of Easter.

1. REFLECTIONS ON THE SUNDAY WORD.



The **first** reflection for this Sunday is from the *Catholic WomenPreach* website and the preacher is Nichole Perone.

Nicole M. Perone is the National Coordinator of ESTEEM, the faith-based leadership formation program for Catholic students at colleges and universities across the United States. ESTEEM is a partnership between Leadership Roundtable and Saint Thomas More Catholic Chapel and Center at Yale University.

Nicole previously served as the Archdiocesan Director of Adult Faith Formation for the Archdiocese of Hartford. She holds a Master of Divinity from Yale University. Her Bachelor of Arts in Theology with double minors in Italian and Catholic Studies was bestowed by Loyola University Maryland, where she graduated summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa.

In 2018, Nicole was a delegate to the Pre-Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment, and served on the writing committee for the final document. Her work has been published by Catholic News Service, America Media, The Jesuit Post, and US Catholic.

Nicole is the chair of the Board of Governors for the National Institute for Ministry with Young Adults, and a member of the Board of Directors of the All Africa Conference: Sister to Sister. She also sits on the National Advisory Council for the NeXt Level initiative of the Center for FaithJustice.

Nicole lives in Milford, Connecticut, USA, with her husband John Grosso (the director of digital media for the Diocese of Bridgeport, Connecticut) and their Golden Retriever, Ellie.

Here is the link to her homily:

<https://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/04112021>

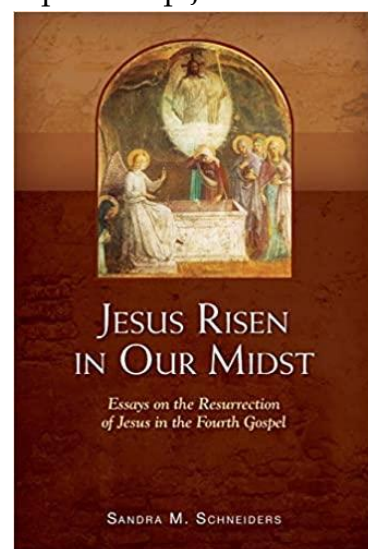


The [second reflection](#) is from Julian McDonald, a Christian Brother from Australia, who ministers in Rome.

“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” And when he said this, he breathed upon them and said to them: “Receive the Holy Spirit” . . . Jesus said to Thomas: “Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.” John 20: 19-31

Today’s gospel-reading has the potential to lift us up and fill us with renewed hope, if only we can absorb its message. In asserting this, I have to admit to struggling with part of it for many years. I just could not understand how Jesus, in breathing on his disciples and commissioning them to do as he had done, could say to them: “Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained” (John 19, 22-23).

Jesus had spent his public ministry reaching out to people who had been rejected and marginalised by the religious authorities who had labelled these people as public sinners. Why then would he tell his disciples to hold on tight to peoples’ sins and, in so doing, to discard them as the religious leaders had done? I found a solution to my puzzlement in a book entitled *Jesus Risen in Our Midst*. It was written by Religious Sister, Sandra Schneiders IHM, a former professor at the Jesuit Theological Union, Berkeley, California. She has written more than a dozen books, many of which were on aspects of Religious Life. I had found some of them really heavy-going, so I picked up *Jesus Risen in Our Midst* with some hesitation. To my surprise, it gripped my attention. In explaining Jesus’ commission to the disciples (quoted above), Sandra Schneiders noted that biblical scholars translating John’s Gospel from the original Greek added the word “sin” to the second part of Jesus’ words of commissioning. Schneiders points out that Jesus did direct his disciples to forgive people’s sins, but to hold tightly to those people, NOT their sins. Isn’t it true that we Christians have often been urged to reject the sin, but not the sinner? If we were to hold fast to rejecting sinners, none of us could claim to being acceptable to Jesus, and none of us could claim to be sharers in his ministry. So, hanging on tightly to our sins and the sins of others would imply self-loathing and the rejection of others. - a total contradiction of the commission given to anyone who would be his disciple.



The almost incredible aspect of John’s account of Jesus’ appearance to and commissioning of the disciples locked away in guilt and fear is that Jesus puts into practice exactly what he commissions those disciples to go out and do. By offering them the greeting of Peace/Shalom and then repeating it, Jesus demonstrates that he is not holding on to their sins of betrayal, denial and desertion, but forgiving them utterly and without reservation, proclaiming that he wants to hold on to (retain) them.

Just in case his community failed to grasp the fact that Jesus was modelling for them the mission of forgiveness he wanted them to take on and continue, John repeated it. A week later, when Thomas had rejoined the disciples, John recounts that Jesus appeared again, greeting them with: "Peace be with you". Jesus was reaching out to them all, yet again, in reassurance and reconciliation. Reminding them of the promise he had made to them in the course of his final meal with them: "Peace is my farewell to you, my peace is my gift to you; I do not give it to you as the world gives peace. So, do not be distressed or fearful" (John 14, 27).

We can understand that the disciples had locked themselves away because they were afraid of being done to death as Jesus had been. We can also appreciate that they were probably filled with guilt at the manner in which they had deserted Jesus when he most needed them. But why could they not accept the testimony of Mary Magdalen who had informed them of her encounter with the Risen Jesus? She had gone directly to them, declaring: "I have seen the Lord!" (John 20, 18).

It is true that, to the Jews of the time, a woman's testimony was regarded as entirely unreliable. As a consequence, they were not allowed to be witnesses in legal proceedings. It's also possible that all those male disciples had dismissed her words as "typical female hysteria"! In John's telling of this story, Jesus has to repeat his greeting of peace to the ten disciples to convince them that he had risen, and that he had really forgiven them. It seems to me that the focus is put on Thomas because he had already earned a reputation for speaking out without thinking. His reaction to the other disciples repeating: "We have seen the Lord" is entirely predictable. He simply was not going to be convinced by anyone's assertions. Maybe he, too, was struggling with believing that even Jesus could forgive the enormity of their failure as a group. Given his reputation for being outspoken, it's entirely understandable that he could not accept that anyone so brutally tortured and done to death as Jesus was could possibly come back to life.

What then is the point of this resurrection account from John? To begin with, we have to remind ourselves that all four Gospel writers offer different accounts of Jesus' resurrection, at times seemingly contradicting one another. Let's remember that they were not writing historical accounts. Rather, their intention was to invite their communities to stop and reflect on their own faith in the assertion that God had raised Jesus from the dead. Nobody will ever be able to prove that Jesus was raised from the dead. In the same way, none of us can prove our love for another person. We can offer words of love and tangible expressions of the love we profess, but we can never prove it.

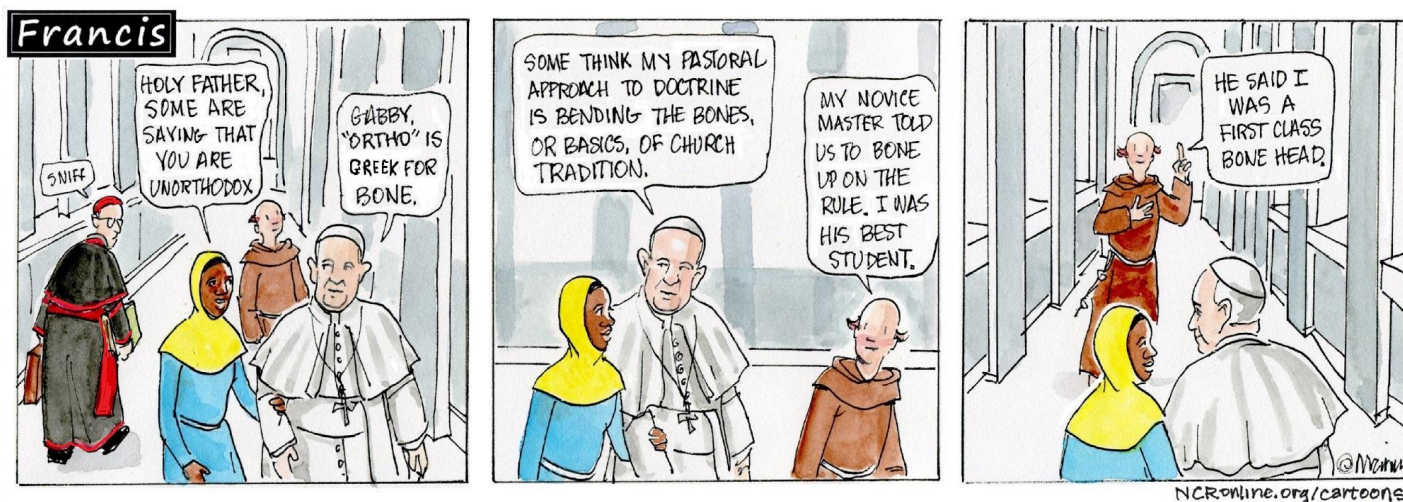
Thomas had been told by his close friends that Jesus was alive, and that they had been talking with him. Typically, he just wasn't going to buy their story. He wanted categorical proof. He wasn't going to accept stories. He would not be satisfied until he met face-to-face with the resurrected Jesus whose stone-dead body had been sealed in a tomb just a few days before. What he got, however, was an encounter with the risen Jesus that threw him into such a tailspin that he dropped all his intentions of conducting an autopsy. The interaction between Thomas and Jesus is held up to us to teach us that searching for proof of Jesus' resurrection, or, indeed, for proof of the existence of God, is utter foolishness. Rather, what we all most need is experiencing the presence of the divine in the very ordinary actions, decisions, encounters and complexities of our day-to-day lives.

into each of us. We know that we get glimpses of that Spirit at work in the love, generosity, compassion and forgiveness of people we encounter and, indeed in our acts of care and compassion towards others. The crucified and risen Jesus lives again in each of us. Maybe we have to get to know him a little better by first touching the scars we carry. Then, we might be able to go out and start practicing resurrection.

2. We pray with and for those who are sick in our parish and beyond: all across the globe infected with COVID-19; former pastor of Boonah parish Fr. Ellis Clifford, Chris Healy, Paul White, Arthur Devin, Liliana Toohill, Libby Shields, Marko Babic, Dermot Peters, Max Gardiner, Bernice Lippiatt, Pat Toohill, Trish Merlehan, Pat Shannon, Bernadette Pinchin, Simon Greatrex, Neil O'Connor, Cate Mitten and sick members of parish families and those beyond our parish boundaries.



3. FRANCIS, THE COMIC STRIP by Pat Marrin – 8th April 2021.



4. Boonah Parish happenings . . .

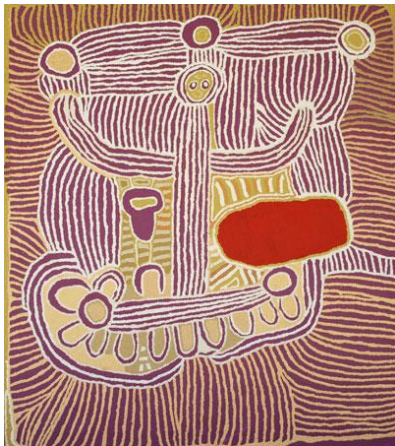
from commands to invitations,
 from laws to ideals,
 from threats to persuasion,
 from coercion to conscience,
 from monologue to conversation,
 from ruling to serving,
 from withdrawn to integrated,
 from vertical and top-down to horizontal,
 from exclusion to inclusion,

from hostility to friendship,
 from static to changing,
 from passive acceptance to active engagement,
 from prescriptive to principled,
 from defined to open-ended,
 from behaviour-modification to conversion of heart,
 from the dictates of law to the dictates of conscience,
 from external conformity to the joyful pursuit of holiness.

When these elements are taken in the aggregate, they indicate a model of spirituality. This, they say, is what good Catholics should look like and this is how they should behave. That means the elements indicate what the Church should look like and how it should behave. This is a significant model-shift. This is a teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

- Fr. John O'Malley SJ, 2006

Our **SUNDAY EUCHARIST** schedule is:



Saturday: EASTER VIGIL
 7.00pm (Boonah church)

Sunday: EASTER SUNDAY
 7.30am (Harrisville church)
 9.30am (Boonah church)

Desert Eucharist by Linda Syddick Napaltjarri (b. 1937)

I am away for a short break this week after the Easter liturgies.

The next Sunday eucharist will be celebrated on Saturday evening 5pm, 18th April.



On behalf of the parish community and visitors who joined us for The Three Days of Easter, thank you to all who ministered in seen and unseen ways.

GRIDUM

BOONAH ST. VINCENT DE PAUL NEEDS OUR HELP!

There is once again an opportunity to help raise funds to support the work of our local conference within the Boonah and Fassifern district.

What is it? To provide **GATEKEEPERS** and assist with parking duties at the upcoming Boonah Show, Friday 28th May and Saturday 29th May.

What am I asked to do? Donate 2 or 3 hours of your time on Friday or Saturday, 28th and 29th May.

When? Between 5.00am and 8.00pm on either day as a team member.

Who? You, your relatives, your friends and neighbours.

John Greatrex would love to hear from you by SUNDAY 2nd MAY 2021:

07 5463 4100

0407 962 625

j.greatrex@bigpond.com



Some folk who received the shorted bulletin embedded in their email last week couldn't access the images . . . thanks for letting me know. Here they are:



recent flooding Boonah 1



recent flooding Boonah 2

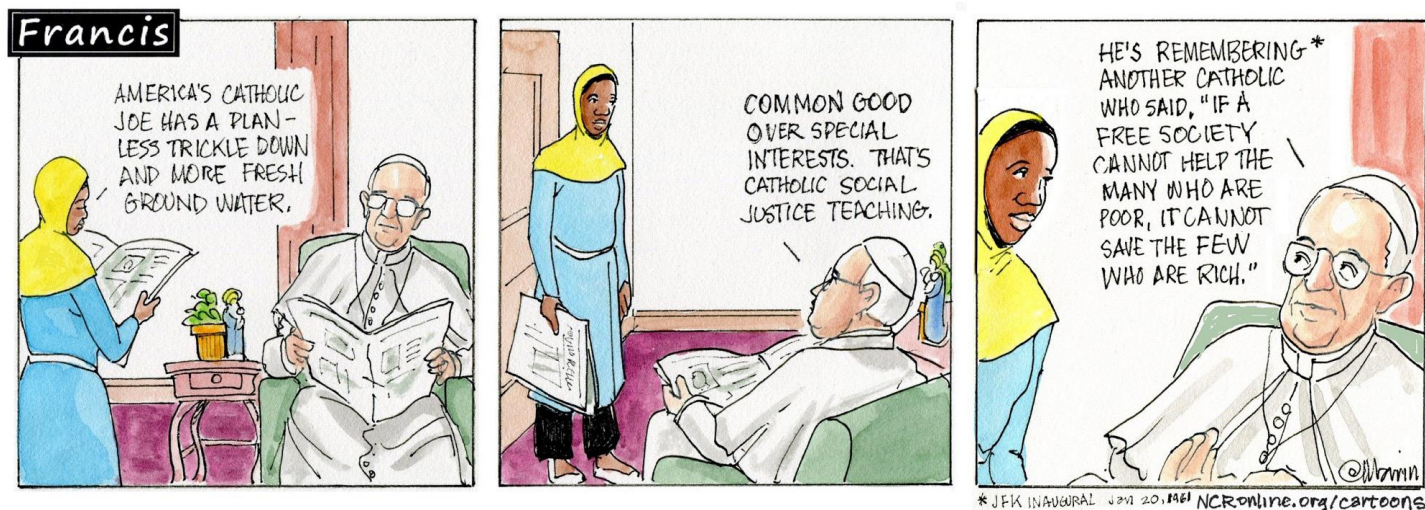


visiting friends from East Timor - seasonal workers: we welcomed Eva and friends



delivery of Easter Care packs by parish school children and staff Thursday before Easter . . . prepared by Yr 6 and Mrs. Vague. The people who received them loved them!

5. FRANCIS, THE COMIC STRIP by Pat Marrin – 6th April 2021.



6. One of our friends of the parish, Mary Anne, shared the following prayer. *Thanks Mary Anne!*



A Prayer After Easter

by Erin M. Cline

O God of the Last Supper
God of the Cross
And God of the Empty Tomb
We come before you now and we pause.

We inhale the scent of snow-white Easter lilies.
We see the rain as it falls in veils and sheets of
April showers. And we listen.

Holy Week has passed.
But how we long to live by the marvellous
story we have heard.

Let us remain ever beside you at the table of
the Last Supper. Show us who is hungry.
And give us the courage to offer them bread
from your table. Show us who is thirsty.

And give us the strength to lift up the cup of
your love.

Most of all, show us how to linger at the table,
serving others— Doing ALL that we do
In remembrance of You,
And the way You were when You walked this earth.

We lift these simple, limited words Up to you,
O God.

Amen.

7. For fifty years, thousands of people around Australia have subscribed to "Liturgy News". This small but influential quarterly magazine has kept them up-to-date in their liturgical understanding.

Now, by producing it as an electronic PDF, we can make it available to you free of charge. It has not only the news, but also background articles that are invaluable for parishes and schools. Priests, religion teachers, pastoral associates, liturgy committees... this magazine is for you!



Don't delete. Save it. Share it. Read it.

With best wishes for Easter Joy.

Tom Elich, *editor*

(The first edition for 2021 is attached to this email)

Happy Easter days!

John

pastor
Boonah Catholic community.