

Jesus Appears to the Apostles

“On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

“Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’

“Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe.’

“Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing.’ Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe’” (John 20:19-29).

Q. 102. How did Jesus lead His Apostles to faith in His Resurrection?

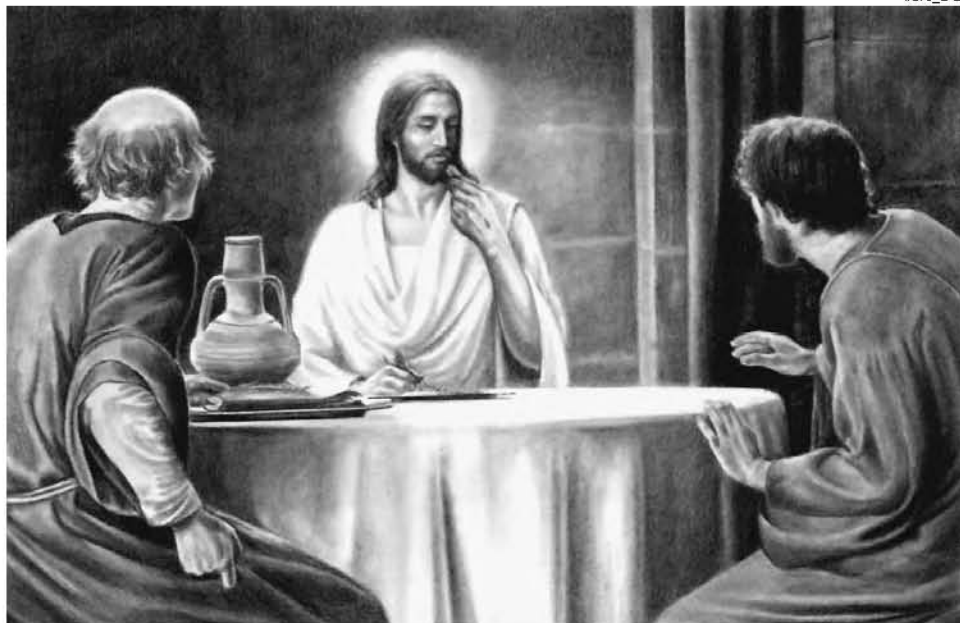
Jesus led His Apostles to believe in His Resurrection by His being present among His followers for forty days in His resurrected and glorified body, by eating with them, by speaking to them, and by allowing Himself to be touched and felt. Clearly He, Whom they saw, touched, and heard, was neither a disembodied spirit nor an illusion.

Sacred Scripture

To them he presented himself alive after his Passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God. *Acts 1:3*

Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you.” But they were startled and frightened, and supposed that they saw a spirit. And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do questionings rise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have.” And when he had said this he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them. *Luke 24:36-43*

For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.



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642 Everything that happened during those Paschal days involves each of the apostles—and Peter in particular—in the building of the new era begun on Easter morning. As witnesses of the Risen One, they remain the foundation stones of his Church. The faith of the first community of believers is based on the witness of concrete men known to the Christians and for the most part still living among them. Peter and the Twelve are the primary “witnesses to his Resurrection,” but they are not the only ones—Paul speaks clearly of more than five hundred persons to whom Jesus appeared on a single occasion and also of James and of all the apostles.¹

Summary Prayer

Most gentle Prince of Peace, Who gave peace to Your Apostles, we beg You, from the fullness of Your Sacred Heart, give us that peace which the world cannot give, that we may faithfully keep Your commandments and serve You without fear of our enemies.

Jesus, before Your death, You informed Peter and the other Apostles that in Your Church they would be given power to bind and loose with respect to sins. When appearing to Your Apostles after Your Resurrection, You actually gave them the power to forgive sins and the authority to judge. This power was given not only to them, but also to their lawful successors.

Jesus, may the loving way in which You brought Thomas to believe, strengthen in us the spirit of love, confidence, and faith in Your Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament, where we cannot see You. May that faith be proven by our fervent devotion at Mass and Holy Communion and by our visits to the tabernacle. We ask this in Your most powerful and holy Name. Amen.

Q. 103. How did the Holy Spirit lead the Apostles towards faith in the Resurrection of Jesus?

The Holy Spirit, by the means of the inner gift of faith, confirmed the Apostles in their outward acceptance of Jesus' Resurrection, as evidenced by St. Thomas and all the Apostles during the early days and years of the Church.

Sacred Scripture

And with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. *Acts 4:33*

And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him. *Acts 5:32*



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644 Even when faced with the reality of the risen Jesus the disciples are still doubtful, so impossible did the thing seem: they thought they were seeing a ghost. “In their joy they were still disbelieving and still wondering.”⁷¹ Thomas will also experience the test of doubt and St. Matthew relates that during the risen Lord’s last appearance in Galilee “some doubted.”⁷² Therefore the hypothesis that the Resurrection was produced by the Apostles’ faith (or credulity) will not hold up. On the contrary their faith in the Resurrection was born, under the action of divine grace, from their direct experience of the reality of the risen Jesus.

Vatican Council II

Holy Mother Church believes that it is for her to celebrate the saving work of her divine Spouse in a sacred commemoration on certain days throughout the course of the year. Once each week, on the day which she has called the Lord’s Day, she keeps the memory of the Lord’s resurrection. She also celebrates it once every year, together with his blessed passion, at Easter, that most solemn of all feasts.

In the course of the year, moreover, she unfolds the whole mystery of Christ from the incarnation and nativity to the ascension, to Pentecost and the expectation of the blessed hope of the coming of the Lord.

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Thus recalling the mysteries of the redemption, she opens up to the faithful the riches of her Lord's powers and merits, so that these are in some way made present for all time; the faithful lay hold of them and are filled with saving grace." *Sacred Liturgy*, 102

Doctrine • Moral • Worship Exercise (see Appendix B for answer key)

1. What did Jesus do after His Resurrection to strengthen His disciples' faith?
2. Meditate on the Scripture verse, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe" (John 20:29).
3. What specific steps can you take to strengthen your faith in the Resurrection?

Chapter Summary Prayer

Jesus, You instructed the Apostles that it was necessary that You should suffer, and, on the third day, rise from the dead. If it was necessary that You should suffer in order to enter into the glory of heaven, there certainly is no other way for us. We have been redeemed by the Cross, and by this sign we must work out our own salvation and the salvation of others. Without the Cross there is no salvation.

Strengthen us with Your grace that, after following Your example and that of Your words in Scripture, and for the love of You, we may patiently bear the trials and sufferings that our work may bring us. In the same measure in which we share Your suffering, shall we share in Your glory in the life after death. Grant us the grace of sharing Your glory in the everlasting bliss of heaven.

We thank You for the inestimable benefit of the institution of the sacrament of Penance. Through frequent confession, You give us an increase of sanctifying grace, a firm confidence in God, peace of conscience, the strength to resist temptation, ease to perform good works, and a lasting joy.

In this sacrament we receive the price of Your Precious Blood and Your five sacred wounds. We thank You for all the graces we have ever received in this sacrament, by which You have rendered spiritual resurrection possible for us. Help us to make use of this great means of grace with confidence, joy, and zeal.

How kind and patient You are in bearing with our faults and in bringing good out of them. When we reflect upon how You have sought us, wandering faithless disciples, and upon how You have visited us with Your grace, we, in admiration of Your loving kindness, exclaim, "My Lord and my God!" Amen.



Family Wisdom Library: Chapter 27

See Appendix A for more references.

Q. 102 How did Jesus lead His Apostles to faith in His Resurrection?

Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy), Vatican II, sect. 5.

Q. 103. How did the Holy Spirit lead the Apostles towards faith in the Resurrection of Jesus?

Dei Verbum (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation), Vatican II, sect. 5, 17-20;

Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 48;

Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy), Vatican II, sect. 5;

On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World, John Paul II, sect. 24.



Thought Provokers

Please see Appendix C for the answers.

- Q. 102: Why do you suppose that the Apostles at first doubted Jesus' bodily Resurrection from the dead, even though He had foretold it?
- Q. 103: The Holy Spirit, through the gift of faith, enabled the Apostles to believe that the resurrected Jesus was the Messiah Who had conquered sin and death. But couldn't their senses and unaided reason alone also have led them to the same firm and certain conviction?