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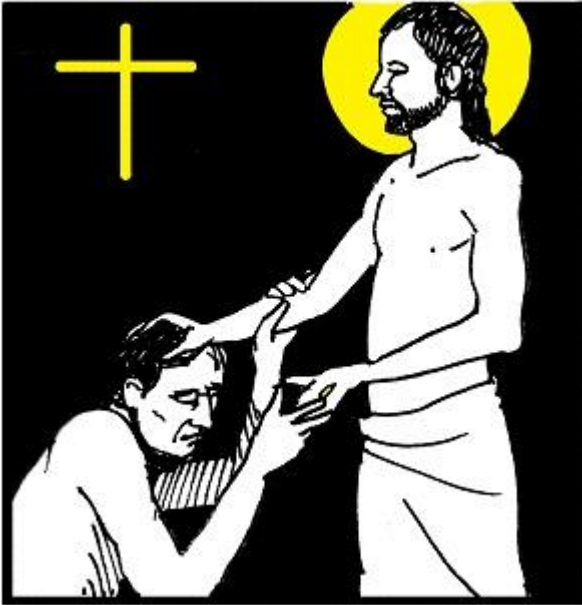
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“He showed them his hands and his side” (John 20:21).

## **Second Sunday of Easter**

*Acts 2:42-47; Ps 118; 1 Pet 1:3-9; John 20:19-31*

My mother used to call us to the dinner table with “Show me your hands” to see if they were clean. If cleanliness is next to Godliness, I have wondered if hand checks await us in heaven. But divine judgment may be more interested in evidence of the lives we have lived than whether our hands are pristine. In fact, rough, worn and damaged hands may be what gets us in.

The risen Christ offered Thomas and the other Apostles his pierced hands and open side as evidence that he was indeed Jesus who had gone to the cross and whose glory was inseparable from his suffering and death. Doubting Thomas was brought to his knees not by a forensic probing of the body but by the revelation that Jesus was his Lord and God and the Servant of Isaiah “wounded for our transgressions” (53:5), foretold by Zechariah: “They will look on the one they have pierced and mourn for him as for an only son” (12:10).

The fourth Gospel, like Luke, reflects the church’s journey to faith by re-examining the Scriptures with eyes opened and hearts burning with the Good News that Jesus, by his death and resurrection, had opened the gates of Mercy to sinners, defeated death and redirected humanity toward its divine destiny as God’s Beloved Community. Believers experienced a rebirth from the side of Christ, washed and

nourished in the blood and water of Baptism and Eucharist.

Today's story of Thomas is for anyone who has ever doubted this revelation. He demands intimate proof that the crucified Jesus is the risen Christ. He receives a theophany that draws him from physical to personal knowledge, the difference between romantic attraction and falling in love, a mind-altering and heart-rending leap to a new level of awareness and existence.

Thomas also opens us to new questions about what resurrection means for our earthly bodies. If Jesus retained in glory the marks of his crucifixion, we, too, will retain the evidence of the lives we have lived. We will know him and one another not as smooth restorations of youthful perfection but as the saints we became by service and suffering. Faces lined like maps, hands worn by the labors of love, hearts made visible by compassion, backs bent and feet calloused on the mountains from carrying others to the Good New and the Good News to them.

We not need to look far to see the crucified and risen Jesus in our world today in the patients of the pandemic and their heroic helpers. Jesus, the Wounded Healer, is with us, and he is inviting all of us to be his hands, his heart and his presence as members of his life-giving body in the world.

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