



SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

CYCLE B

Acts 4:32–35
1 John 5:1–6
John 20:19–31

GATHERING

(An Easter lily, a crucifix and a bible lay on a table in the gathering place.)

Last week we reflected on Easter and our faith journey. When the community has gathered, members share with one another where they have experienced Jesus in their Easter celebrations.

OPENING PRAYER

Leader: Let us sit in silence. *(The "Peace Prayer", is played in the background. The song may be found on the Internet.)*

(The group divides into two groups for the prayer which follows.)

Nicene Creed

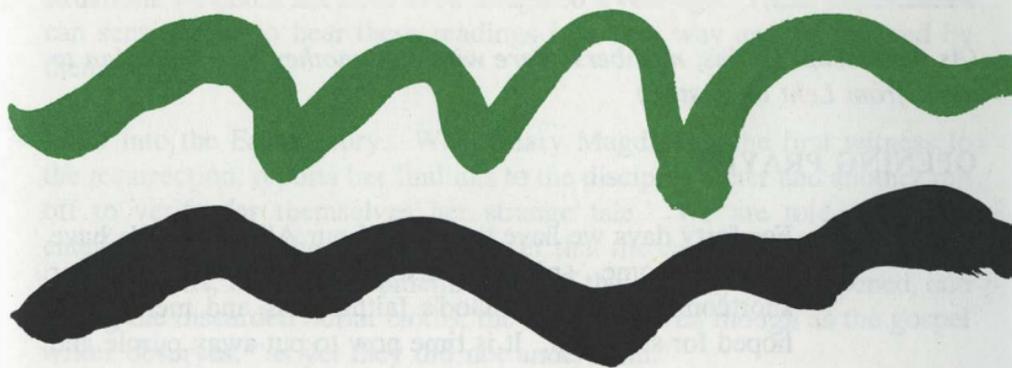
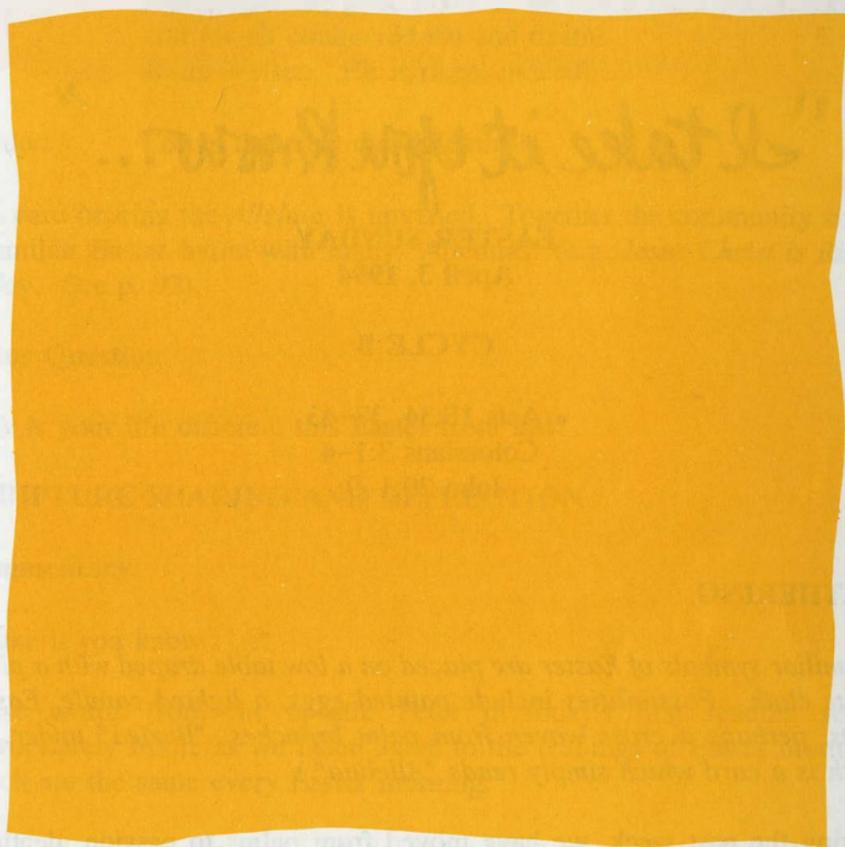
Leader: WE BELIEVE

All: in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

- I. WE BELIEVE, in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, True God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father.
- All: WE BELIEVE, through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven.
- II. WE BELIEVE, by the power of the Holy Spirit, he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.
- All: WE BELIEVE, by the power of the Holy Spirit, he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, suffered, died and was buried.
- I. WE BELIEVE, on the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scripture; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
- II. WE BELIEVE, he will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.
- All: WE BELIEVE, in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Focus Question

What causes you to accept or reject beliefs?



SCRIPTURE SHARING AND REFLECTION

Commentary

The days immediately following the resurrection of Jesus were confusing for those who had followed and experienced the events of Jesus' life. They were mixed in their acceptance and understanding of his death and resurrection. To accept that Jesus had risen would have far reaching consequences for the believer. It would mean accepting the teachings of Jesus, recognizing that Jesus indeed was of God. Supporting and helping one another in remembering, in the sharing of their experiences, helped them to believe that indeed Jesus had risen. Some immediately embraced the belief that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. For Thomas to believe, however, that his beloved Jesus had risen, was too much for him. He needed proof (John 11:16).

Last week we began this celebration of Easter. We affirmed the beliefs which make up our faith. We discover that we are much like that first group of disciples. Some of us radically embrace all that Jesus taught. Others of us are filled with doubt. Most of us vacillate between believing and doubt. How does this affect our relationship with God?

Our focus needs to shift from ourselves to Jesus. Jesus showed that God's love and forgiveness does not depend on our understanding or belief when he appeared to the disciples and to Thomas and offered them peace and reconciliation. God's love is always there holding us both in times of certainty and times of doubt.

Doubt and certainty are part of living a life of faith. When we accept God's love and forgiveness our faith is strengthened and we become gift for others. In times of certainty we can reassure others. In times of doubt, our faith can be made stronger by another's witness. We can offer peace and reconciliation to one another, which becomes a sign of Jesus being in our midst. Again our faith is strengthened. We can trust in our times of doubt, for faith is born in trust. Then alone or together we can say, I believe, we believe.

FAITH SHARING AND INTEGRATION

1. How has sharing God's love in your life helped someone else to believe more deeply that they are loved?
2. When do you experience doubt? How do you resolve periods of doubt?
3. How does the small group help to strengthen your faith?

RESPONSE IN ACTION

Leader: In the light of our sharing of life and faith over the scripture for this week's liturgy, what does God ask of you, personally; what does God ask of us as a community? *(After an extended pause, the leader invites responses from the community.)*

Suggestions:

1. Reach out to a family member who seems alienated by previous unresolved hurts.
2. Plan with others how the parish can reach out to those in the community who are alienated; invite them to a special event where members of the small community share their stories.
3. How are the communities (eg. family, parish, small community, neighborhood or town/city) of which you are a part being presently challenged to choose life over death? How can you help?

SENDING FORTH AND CLOSING PRAYER

(The community joins in singing, "The Peace Prayer". The song may be found on the Internet. Members embrace one another in Christ's peace.)