

The Rev. Dr. David K. McIntosh  
April 12, 2026- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter (A)  
Given at Christ Church Quaker Farms, Oxford, CT

**Acts 2:14, 22-32; Psalm 16; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31**

**“As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” †**

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Happy Easter! Christ is risen! On this 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter, we hear some of the Resurrection stories from the Gospel of John. We are told of the ‘disciples in the upper room’ hiding in *fear*, and of the uncertainty of Thomas the Twin, who’s *doubtful*.

The fear that overtook the disciples is something I can relate to, and I suspect many of us can relate to. Whenever I turn on the TV or whenever I read the news, I am overwhelmed by what I experience. The violence of wars & terror that are killing so many; the numerous fires and floods affecting our communities; the financial worries of so many and the loss of jobs; and the constant political rhetoric; it’s enough to scare anybody. We live in a world where there is much to be afraid of, a world yearning to see God’s presence. And we, like Thomas, sometimes feel abandoned... we want proof God’s here. And it’s reasonable to want to see, to have that proof of God’s *real* presence with us.

The scene in today’s Gospel, between Jesus and the disciples and between Jesus and Thomas, reveals how the Risen Christ *seeks us* out. How Christ *comes to us* in the neediest of times, in moments of hopelessness, and amid fear. In moments that seem hopeless and times we feel like failures, God is there. In times we feel all alone, God is there. For God’s Grace, the love of God, has been given to us all through the Death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and it is free and unexpected.

I’m not sure if any of you know that this Sunday is often referred to as “Low Sunday” because it is less spectacular than all the celebrations of the Vigil and Easter Sunday. I prefer to use its other name, “Quasi Modo Sunday.” This doesn’t refer to the hunchback, but to the Latin words for the introit assigned at the beginning of the service on this day— “*Quasi modo geniti infantes*” or “just as newborn babes”— it refers to our new lives given because of the resurrection. We are like newborn infants. And this made me reflect on that idea of *new life*.

At the end of today’s Gospel, the author states it was written so that “you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have *life* in his name.” That word ‘life’ caught my attention... As I like to do, I went to the Greek text. In Greek there are several words to describe life, whereas in English, we only use one word (this is often the case for many words). In Greek, there is ‘*bios*,’ which refers the material substance of life, the state of cells and organisms being alive— demonstrating those qualities of eating, making energy, and reproducing. Then, there is ‘*psyche*’ referring specifically to our physical & cognitive life as beings. And finally, there is ‘*zoe*,’ the spiritual life, the essence of being, literally ‘life of the age.’

In this passage at the end of chapter 20, the word used is *zoe*, ‘spiritual life’, not *psyche* or *bios*. And *zoe* is used in a few other places in this Gospel of John: In the beginning when the Word of God was present at creation and we are told, “what came into being in Him was life (*zoe*) and

the life (*zoe*) was the light of all people” (1:4). It’s also found in chapter 6 when Jesus claims, “I am the Bread of Life (*zoe*)” (6:48), the “Living (*zoe*) bread come down from heaven” (6:51). With this in mind, and again turning back to the last portion of the Gospel, *zoe* is a different kind of life. It’s a spiritual life that never ends... the ‘life of the ages.’

It’s important to understand that *zoe* doesn’t replace *psyche*. We who are Christians and accept Christ are still people in these bodies, and our physical/ mental forms have not changed. Each of our minds and souls are uniquely ours. And, after receiving the Grace of resurrection, we have ‘new life’ in Christ. We are transformed into something new, and in many ways, we are like newborn babes. That’s basis of our belief in ‘eternal life’ — although all of us will die one day and these bodies cease to exist, our *real life* in Christ, our *eternal life* will never end. That is the message of Easter!

Notice also, when the Risen Jesus breathed on the disciples, they received a Spirit that made them apostles (those sent out as messengers). Central to the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel is the concept of the ‘Word becoming flesh’ (1.14), These fearful disciples have become ‘word made flesh’ messengers... “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” They were changed and became apostles... those who were to spread the truth and teach others who have not seen, so that they too may come to believe. As Peter said in Acts, “This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.”

It’s wonderful that the Lectionary of the Church pairs the Johannine Gospel story, of those who were cowering in the upper room behind locked doors, with the Acts passage, where Peter and the rest boldly stand up to the authorities, as witnesses to Christ? They boldly teach without fear! They teach of the overwhelming love of our God, who sent the Son to give us eternal life. As we heard in the Epistle of Peter, it’s not about fear, but about love... the love of God in Jesus Christ. For “there is no fear in love, perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4.18)!

So, let’s remember on this ‘Quasi Modo Sunday,’ we have new life and new responsibility. Remember our Saviour’s words: “As the Father sent me, so I send you.” †