

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter Time - Year A

There is a book called "Believe It or Not" written by Robert Ripley. Mr. Ripley enjoyed collecting strange and amazing bits of information which, although they seem unbelievable, were true. He first published his amazing facts as cartoons in the newspaper, but they became so popular that they were published in book form, made into radio and television programs, and there is even a chain of "Believe It Or Not" museums. Let me read some examples of some of the amazing things you will find in his book.

Joann Barnes, a fifteen-year-old from California, once swung sixty-eight hula-hoops on her body at the same time! Can you believe that? I can't even keep one hula-hoop going. "Believe It Or Not"

A man by the name of James Cook once had a chicken that laid a perfectly square egg. "Believe It Or Not"

The world's largest weenie was over 3000 feet long, weighed 885 pounds, and took 103 butchers to carry it? "Believe It Or Not"

On the Sunday that Jesus rose from the grave, he appeared to a group of his disciples. One of the disciples, whose name was Thomas, was not with them. When the disciples told Thomas that they had seen Jesus and that he was alive, "Believe It Or Not" Thomas said, "I won't believe it until I see it with my own eyes. I want to put my finger in the nail-prints in his hands -- and place my hand where the spear was thrust into his side.

Where was he when JC appeared the 1<sup>st</sup> time? All others were there, where was he?

- He separated himself from them.
  - Maybe grief - Maybe fear
  - But he wasn't with them – and what happened?
    - He missed Jesus
  - In our trial – we need each other "Believe It Or Not"
  - Because it is united as Church that we meet Jesus!
- This week is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter – MERCY SUNDAY
  - It's no coincidence that Mercy Sunday is in the Easter Season
  - A time of joy, rejoicing, celebrating Jesus' victory over death
  - Sin is forgiven! Death is defeated! Mercy triumphs over Justice
- You can see it in this week's Gospel - When Jesus appears, what does He do?
  - Breathes on them – Receive the HS – Sins you forgive are forgiven
  - Sins you retain are retained

### **Apostles receive something new**

They receive the Holy Spirit **and the ability to forgive sin**  
*(never before in human history)*

### **WHY**

Jesus knew our sin & our need for forgiveness SO WE RECEIVE GIFT OF MERCY

Forgiveness was important to Early Church

- Converts were those who had shouted for Jesus' death
- Converts had taken part in the proceedings of the Sanhedrin
- Converts had to deal with family and friends as they became Christians
- Look at Doubting Thomas – one of the 12! – He doesn't even believe the Apostles!  
AND Jesus was ready – Jesus meets Thomas right where he is, despite his disbelief.  
So too with us – in our crisis – when OUR faith slips, he meets us right where we are.

This gospel ends "Blessed are those who have not seen and believe"

Jesus is talking to us – In faith we embrace JC as Lord – In faith we are Church

In faith Mercy triumphs – Salvation comes through forgiveness of Sin

Forgiveness of sin is only possibly through the Mercy of Jesus – and it's all ours!