

## Introduction to the Readings for Easter 2

### Old Testament: Acts 4: 32-35

The infant Church received its power from the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, but it was the message of Easter that animated the Apostles as they reached out in Jesus' name to tell of his love. This love is expressed by the converts in a mutual sharing and care for one another, which poses a great challenge to us today – how far are we prepared to put all we have at Christ's disposal, and for the benefit of others? Above all, there was a real spirit of generosity amongst the people. Sadly, this didn't last, but it is a reminder to us that we are to love our neighbour as ourselves.

### Epistle: 1 John 1: 1 – 2: 2

This is a moving testimony of one who was with Jesus and is filled with faith and the energy this can give. This passage is the opposite to our worship, which expresses to God our praise and thanksgiving; it sets out our duty to share our understanding of what God has done for us by telling others in simple terms the truth about Jesus. John was clearly full of the events he was describing, sets out a summary of the Christian faith, and urges us to do likewise with those with whom we mix with day by day. In short, the Christian faith is about believing and doing – faith leading to action. Perhaps this is where we fall down too often today?

### Gospel: John 20: 19-31

This is the account of the second of the resurrection appearances of Jesus. He has physical being, inviting the disciples to touch him and yet he is not now limited to walls and locks. The resurrection has brought a new dimension into their understanding. This appearance is to a confused and frightened group of men and it brings with it a new sense of peace and purpose, as he sends them out in the power of the Spirit, vv 22,23. Thomas was absent on this occasion and won't believe what the others tell him about Jesus. Then Jesus is with them again and challenges Thomas, who submits with his faith renewed. Most people will not have the privilege that Thomas had, and have to believe on the evidence of the signs that Jesus gave us, v29. This is why John's gospel was written to record these signs, v31. Overall, there is the charge that we are to be out in the world telling of Jesus.