



build. plant. grow.  
the word this week



easter



lectionary  
reading

## Cycle A

### Second Sunday of Easter of Divine Mercy

Lectionary 43

#### Reading I: Acts 2: 42-47

This passage from the Acts of the Apostles represents the best of what God's people are capable of, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Here we encounter a community that holds highest the practices of hospitality, charity, mutuality and worship. These are the benchmarks of those things to be striven for by any **community** that proclaims itself as followers of Christ Jesus. This passage presents an extraordinary view and practice of commitment and unity. It is the "ideal picture" of a community that we should strive to become.

#### Reading 2: 1 Peter 1:3-9

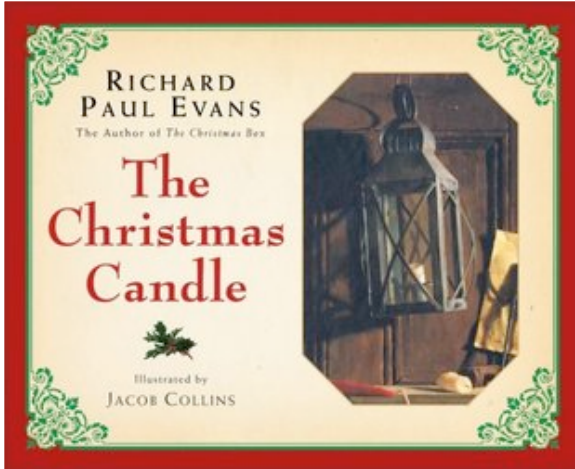
This reading from the first letter of Saint Peter speaks of the fact that it takes a **community** of believers to help an individual remain strong in their faith. This scripture passage, from earliest times, has been read as part of the baptismal liturgy. St. Peter's purpose here is to strengthen those being baptized and initiated into a church that is in the midst of terrible persecution. The Jewish Christians are being thrown out of the Temple in Jerusalem and the Christian movement has become the scapegoat for the troubles occurring in Rome. Saint Peter writes this letter to serve as a source of strength for the **community**.

#### Gospel: John 20:19-31

The encounter we have with St. Thomas in today's gospel actually brings all of us hope. Thomas represents all of us in our struggle with faith. We all are a combination of both believing and disbelieving. A **community** of believers is essential for us when in the throws of doubt. Notice that the name Thomas means "twin." We never learn who he is twin to and thus scripture scholars believe that it is a literary device to allow us to be the twin. We too, like Thomas, have our moments of doubt and likewise our moments where we proclaim in full faith that Jesus is *my Lord and my God*. It is important to recognize that when Jesus bestows the Holy Spirit upon the disciples, he does so when they are gathered as a **community**. Jesus bestows upon them the power to bind and loose sins as a community. To this day when a priest gives absolution for sins, it is in the name of Jesus Christ and through the ministry of the Church (**Community**).



children's  
story



### The Christmas Candle

Written by Richard Paul Evans

Illustrated by Jacob Collins

Copyright 2006 Simin and Schuster

ISBN-10: 1416926828

ISBN-13: 1416926825



character  
education  
activity

**Community, at its best, is a reflection of the loving relationship of the three persons of the TRINITY, and as such the very basis of community is love.**

## The Christmas Candle

One might be curious about the selection of a Christmas story for the season of Easter. The reason is this: often the great feasts of the Church are seen as disconnected, and as catechists, it is our responsibility to help the students and others to make the connection. The story of the *The Christmas Candle* has much to do with the this Second Sunday of Easter in its dedication to The Divine Mercy of Jesus. The story is about a self-satisfied young man who comes to the realization that all--that is the **community**, from great to small, are members of the one family of God. Thomas, this young man, is returning to his comfortable home on a cold Christmas Eve. He shoves a beggar to the side in order to enter a candle shop to buy a candle for his lantern in order to lead him safely home. He chooses a very simple and cheap candle, but the candlemaker warns him that the simple one he has chosen, although inexpensive, may prove to be costly. As the story progresses the light of the candle turns the face of each needy person he sees into the face of a family member. By the time he arrives home, Thomas has given away everything he had purchased as Christmas gifts for his family. The story provides a grand opportunity to see the **community** as the larger family of God.

### Activity

This is a wonderful opportunity to establish the **community** that is desired in the classroom.

Step One: Brainstorm with the students the words that they would want to reflect the atmosphere and behavior in their classroom each day. List a reasonable number of words then have the students vote by a show of hands for the words they most want to be part of the covenant that they will establish with one another.

Step Two: Once the voting has been done, the words selected will be used to write a "classroom covenant." The students will need the help of the teacher in constructing this document. Once the document is constructed and edited, have it enlarged and have each student sign their name to it as an official agreement among them. Laminate it and place it in a prominent place in the classroom. Provide a copy for each student that they would keep in their three ring binder.

The word **COMMUNITY** come from the latin word "communio" which means to be involved in mutual participation, sharing and fellowship.



case study

Look.  
Feel.  
Know.  
Act.

## What could you do today?

Conduct an interview with family members, especially your parents, and if possible your grandparents or others that would be the age of your grandparents. Use the following format:

An Interview with: \_\_\_\_\_

An interview by: \_\_\_\_\_

1.) When you were my age, what type of responsibilities did you have:

at home?

at school?

at church?

2.) When you think back about all the responsibilities you had growing up, which one(s) do you think was/were the most important? Why?

3.) Do you see differences between the responsibilities you had and those of kids today? If so, why do you think they are so different?

## Look Feel Know Act

Look around and identify all the various **communities** to which you belong. Try to identify how they contribute to your life and how you contribute to the life of the **community**. Make a decision to include as many of the names of each member of the communities to which you belong in your prayer of thanksgiving at the end of the day. You may want to make a scroll of the names and hold the scroll in your hands as you make your prayer at the end of the day. You may wish to leave room for the addition of new names to be added to the scroll. In the morning place the scroll on your pillow so that it will serve as a reminder to remember all the special people God has given to you in all the different **communities** to which you belong.

*The Christmas Candle* focuses on a source of light to assist a young man to find his way home. The Light of Christ is the dominant Easter symbol and it is the light that allows a person to see clearly. The parallel of *The Christmas Candle* and the Light of Christ provide a method for seeing differently and beyond the mere physical sense of sight. The *light* becomes the means by which one can truly see with the heart. Another book, for older children, would be *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint Exupery. Essentially both stories provide an opportunity to see the importance of **community**.



**closing  
tool**

**Pray that you will always be a source of blessing to each and every community of which you belong and that those in community with you will also be a source of blessing. Amen**



**Santa Clara  
University**

Character Education at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics  
ethics programs for communities that learn, live, pray, or work together

[www.scu.edu/character](http://www.scu.edu/character)