

FR HUGH'S HOMILY FOR SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER 2026

When Jesus appears to the apostles after the resurrection, he wants to share three things with them. The second two are bound together as they are central to his Church.

The first is peace. This is the very first thing he comes to impart, surely then the most important to him. If we look at the history of the human church we may wonder how we drifted so far from it on many occasions. How Christians can still be exhorting each other to warfare. Pope Leo as the church's leader reminded us of this on Easter Day when he spoke to the whole world. "The power with which Christ rose is entirely nonviolent. It is like that of a grain of wheat which, having rotted in the earth, grows, breaks through the clouds, sprouts, and becomes a golden ear of wheat. It is even more like that of a human heart which, wounded by an offense, rejects the instinct for revenge and, filled with compassion, prays for the one who has committed the offense."

On Palm Sunday the Pope said: Brothers and sisters, this is our God: *Jesus, King of Peace*, who rejects war, whom no one can use to justify war. He does not listen to the prayers of those who wage war, but rejects them, saying: "Even though you make many prayers, I will not listen: your hands are full of blood" quoting Isaiah. (*Is* 1:15).

This Easter time is the time we recall the origins of our Church. Refresh our memories as to what Jesus calls us to be about. How do these quotes from the Pope and Jesus' words sit alongside our world today? Like Thomas we doubt we can live by them.

Then Jesus goes on to lay hands on the apostles and pour his Spirit into them, just as his father did at Creation, into this Adam. God moulded a person out of clay and then breathed his life into the clay to bring it alive and so all humanity has that breath of life in it, often sadly too well buried. As Pope Leo said at Easter: "Yes, Christ's resurrection is the beginning of a new humanity; it is the entrance into the true promised land, where justice, freedom, and peace reign, where all recognise one another as brothers and sisters, children of the same Father who is Love, Life, and Light." Our Church is a new start for creation. Resurrection and re-creation. What will be the key to holding this Church together in this world? That, Jesus stresses is forgiveness.

Peace, renewal, forgiveness. "Jesus did not arm himself, or defend himself, or fight any war. He revealed the gentle face of God, who always rejects violence." The Pope said at Easter.

This has to be our response to what is taking place in the world around us. It is only in following the risen Jesus in this that our Church can truly come to life.