

2nd Sunday of Easter A 2020 Doubt and Faith

The urban dictionary describes Thomas as a kind, caring, and funny person, who appreciates others. He hates negative confrontation and some would call him a “**peace maker**”. It ends with: Thomas is a really great guy who deserves recognition!!!

Thomas the apostle in today’s reading doesn’t quite fit the description but he is an interesting character. We first hear Thomas speak in the Gospel of John 11:16. When Lazarus had recently died, the apostles do not wish to go back to Judea, where Lazarus was, because some Jews had attempted to stone Jesus there. Thomas however declares: *"Let us also go, that we may die with him."* Thomas is ready to sacrifice everything for Jesus and unafraid to say so. **There are times in our lives** when we are ready and willing to do the same but a change in circumstance and our courage fails leading us to give a very different response.

Thomas appears again in John 14:5 at the Last Supper. Jesus had just explained that he was going away to prepare a heavenly home for his followers, and that one day they would join him there. Thomas reacted by saying, *"Lord, we do not know where you are going so how can we know the way?"* The first part of Chapter 14 is a gospel that is often used at funerals. Once again Thomas speaks up and voices the question that all those present at the supper wanted to ask.

Then, although all the disciples of Jesus did not believe that Jesus had risen until they saw him, Thomas was the only one to openly admit it. Yet he was also the only one to respond to his encounter with Jesus by proclaiming that Jesus was both Messiah and God. Thomas has an open honesty about him. He is unafraid to question and to challenge. Unafraid to declare his position and yet open and able to make a complete U-turn. Not many can stand with him on this.

It is encouraging to have someone like Thomas the Apostle around. Sometimes in life our faith is solid and we stand with courage. Certain that Christ is by our side, we are ready to face anything. There are times in living our faith when we face uncertainty about where it is all leading, or we ask ourselves if we are on the right path - the path God has asked us to follow. And, like Thomas, we ask about the way ahead, and, even if we do not receive a clear or direct answer, we continue to move forward in hope and trust, just as Thomas did.

And there are times when God seems to be absent from our lives. Gone. And we believe that God is not coming back. Thomas teaches us to be open and up front about everything in our lives especially our questions and our doubts, our loss of courage and our seemingly loss of faith and purpose. But if we stay with it, like Thomas, when we encounter Jesus anew, as we will, our faith will be strengthened all the more with new life and a new desire to be Good News just as Thomas did with the rest of his life for the people in India.

Today is Divine Mercy Sunday when we recognise the many different ways in which the mercy of God works. The mercy of God did not penalise Thomas for his doubt but led Thomas into recognising the divinity of Christ. God's mercy is always about restoring life both physical and spiritual. It is about healing and strengthening faith. It is about promoting and urging us to do good, to reach out to others whatever their need. Jesus showers down his mercy on us so that we will become instruments of his mercy for others. Thomas is our model.

Every good work, every good wish, every Easter blessing and every Alleluia travels with the wings of mercy. Let us proudly say together:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

There was a family of four with a 9 year old daughter Lisa and a 5 year old son Mark. Lisa was diagnosed with a rare blood disease and was predicted to die soon if the doctors did not get the cure which was

some amount of blood matching their requirements – blood likely to be found in a blood relative. Upon testing it was found that her brother Mark's blood was a compatible match.

Mark was asked by his parents if he would agree to give Lisa his blood. Mark asked, "Will it save Lisa?" When they said yes, he agreed. 2 days later the blood transfer began. Mark was put on a bed next to Lisa's till the blood was extracted. After some time, Mark began feeling dizzy and asked the doctors if this is the time he would start dying? The doctors were amazed but later it clicked with them that **Mark never knew the amount of blood required to cure Lisa; he thought all of his blood was needed and still he had agreed to it. Now that's true courage!!!!**

AND

A bank robber pulls out a gun and points it at the teller, and says, "Give me all the money or you're geography!"

The puzzled teller replies, "Did you mean to say 'or you're history?'"

The robber says, "Don't change the subject!"