

Thomas also called Didymus, the Twin. He had a twin. Tradition says he went onto bring the Gospel to India, where one of the oldest churches in Christianity still exists today. Thomas, the skeptic, even cynical disciple. That resurrection Sunday evening Thomas wasn't there. See what happens when you miss church? You miss Jesus' words, wounds, breath and Spirit. You miss Jesus you hear and touch. Who speaks to you and gives His gifts.

Our Lord's admonition to Thomas, stop doubting is simply the admonition to stop sinning. All sin is doubt. For it doubts God is good, that He loves us. We see things go on in our lives, in our family. Doubt accuses the Lord of holding out on us, of being less than loving, not really understanding what we need. We think maybe God is mad at us, or doesn't love us as much as others. Why isn't God helping us more thru tough times, why doesn't he care more, get more involved to help. We think ourselves wiser than God, knowing better than He what is good for us. This is doubt. Doubts God is good, wise, loves us, involved in our lives.

Thomas' twin is me and you. Theologically speaking. Scripture is telling us something here. Just how close we are to Thomas, like twins. Not that we don't believe Jesus' resurrection; but like Thomas, we only want to believe what we can look at, experience, feel for ourselves. Like Thomas we demands signs. Prove yourself God, that I know You are good , You are there, that You care. Jesus calls us simply to believe His Word, to hold firmly to His resurrection truth, to trust the reality of what He brings and gives even when we can't see 1st-hand as we might wish. **Don't disbelieve but believe.**

He had seen all that had happened, the torture, brutality of man, he'd seen it all. You've seen much in your life. For Thomas, for us, seeing is believing. There's only 1 problem, believing is not seeing. Faith is in what is not seen. Jesus looks like a man, is a man, but faith confesses, Jesus is also God Himself, there's no other God.

As with you, You do your daily work, put up with sinful actions, you may think what's the point, disappointments, stress, rude people, and messes, you go thru your daily grind- yet faith says, My labor is holy labor in God's creation, for I am God's tool that He uses to care for others.

Your body wears old, breakdown, you handle affliction, disease, treatments, medications, you hurt, you get sick- yet faith says I am a child of God, well-pleasing to Him, cared for, and I will live forever.

When you see the death of a loved one, aching from your inner most parts, that you've lost them, you may feel that life isn't worth going on, that life has a futility that's overwhelming, the despair, pain of loss- yet faith says I will embrace them again soon in paradise.

To believe -to confess God is where God seems not to be; to confess God is good when God seems not caring or bad; to confess what seems insignificant –like bread and wine, and things forgotten-like your baptism- is the very powerhouse of the Godman coming to you, working in you; the very treasures of Him and of His kingdom, what looks insignificant to the world and not what you see- that is faith. And that's why faith is a gift. Because you can't do it.

Jesus doesn't appear to Thomas to rebuke his doubts. He reaches out in compassion, touch my hands and side. He isn't angry. For all the things the disciples did to Him, deserting Him, denying Him at his hour of glory, not listening to His foretelling His passion and resurrection, for doubting the resurrection, for their fear of what other might do to them -the disciples and you -have done this to yourself, burden in sin, living in doubt, fears, failures, have robbed you of His joy - our Lord comes in to restore, to bind up sins in His wounds, speaking words of absolution to forgive you.

He takes your doubt, your fears and your shame and bitterness and makes them His own. He takes His faith and glory, His joy and life and He makes them your own by the power of His word and Sacrament.

He doesn't remove your outward troubles. He gives you something far better- inward peace. He may leave in place your dysfunctional family, your disease, your addiction, your pain but He will not leave a heart empty of His peace. Peace, not just some emotional contentment but a reality of your new life. Peace with God comes only from Christ's dying on the cross. He doesn't say, Thomas, make a commitment to me or give me your heart or other spiritual nonsense; nor does He perform miracles. What does He do? He points to His scars. There is your peace. Consider my holy wounds for you. Peace that knows no matter how bad this world gets, no matter what troubles come your way, any suffering here is not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed.

**Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed.** Words not be taken lightly, to bless you for your believing, that we too keep His holy scars, what He did, is doing, ever before you.

**Do not afraid.** Terrible things might happen. Jesus lives. Face the future with confidence. Pain, sorrow, even death are all temporary. Ours is the one true religion, of new starts, of 2nd birth, of do-overs, of new life. The death and resurrection of Jesus is the most significant thing in your life. It makes everything new. **Peace be with you.** Death cannot hold Him, it will not hold you. One day, you will stand before Christ; see as Thomas did those sacred wounds that healed you. You can touch His hands and side. Thomas provides a great example and confession for you, as you fall at Jesus' feet and cry out—**My Lord and my God!**

At first, when the Lord appeared to the Ten in the Upper Room on Easter evening they were not glad. They become glad only after He showed them His hands and His side and spoke peace upon them. Then they were glad. They were glad because the Lord had been crucified and was alive. He sought them out as He had sought Adam in the garden, coming not for vengeance but in peace.

They were not glad because the Lord had escaped death. He had not escaped death. He had not tricked the guards or only seemed to die. They are glad because His hands and His side prove that He died and that by crucifixion. He did not escape death but suffered it and then overcame it. That is why and how He came in peace. Atonement had been made by His death. The sacrifice and ransom were complete on the cursed tree become the tree of life. The Law had been satisfied. This is eternally memorialized in the marks on His hands.

If you want to see Jesus, look to His hour of glorification on the cross. That is how He wants to be known, that is where His heart is laid bare, that is how God loves the world. There He draws all men unto Himself.

“disbelief” in today’s text for Thomas’s state when he keeps himself away from the disciples fellowship. He is struggling.

It could be Thomas is throwing a temper tantrum. Perhaps acting like a cat whose owners have returned home after a vacation. He feels that someone Jesus did not do things in the way He desired, expects more. But He is afraid. Lacking faith, he lacks peace. He is at odds with Jesus. Therefore he is also at odds with his brothers.

What is a bit amazing is that Thomas rightly discerns what it will take to convert him back to faith in Christ. He will not believe unless he sees the place of the nails in the Lord’s hands and side. He is exactly right. I don’t think Thomas figured this out on his own. Rather, without even knowing it, the other apostles have catechized him in their report. They told him what Jesus did: He showed them His hands and His side. He spoke peace upon them and bestowed the Holy Spirit upon them to send them forth with the forgiveness of sins. Thomas is trying to save face or protect his heart, but the Apostolic Word is working on him. He is thinking about the implications of how and why Jesus died.

The demand that Thomas makes is bold but it also reveals his secret hope. It is a prayer. Thomas says: “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my

hand into his side, I will never believe.” And he really means: “Lord, let me be an apostle. Give me another chance. Do unto me what you did to the other ten. Please, let it be real. Be alive, out of death. Show me your hands and side and give me the peace I so desperately need. Show me your hands and your side, show me how You died, and I will believe.” The Lord is remarkably patient with Thomas. He puts up with imperfect actions and prayers, not unlike you. He comes back on the eighth day, one week later, seeking Thomas and again He come in peace, bringing peace. He meets Thomas’ demands. He answers the prayer. He invites Thomas to put His finger into the scar left by the nails in His hands and to put His hand into the place from whence came water and blood. in the end, it is the Word that converts Thomas. It is the bestowal of peace and the offer of intimacy. It is also the admonition and rebuke: “Do not disbelieve, but believe.” the Lord spoke and Thomas believed. Jesus is speaking of you, of course, when He responds to the confession of Thomas. “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.” What don’t we see? We don’t see the Lord’s risen Body with our eyes. We see bread and wine. We don’t see the marks. We see instead reminders, crosses, that celebrate and confess the kind of death that Jesus died. We see an altar upon which nothing was ever sacrificed and we make it a table from which the Lord feeds us His risen Body and Blood. What then do we believe? We believed that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of His Father from eternity, and also true Man, born of the virgin Mary is our Lord, that He was crucified for us to be Our Lord, in our place, as a Substitute for us, to be our Redeemer, and that He finished death on the cross and overcome death by His resurrection to be our Bridegroom. Therein He declares us to be blessed, righteous, and holy. We believe that He who lives loves us and has reconciled Himself to us, that He is patient with us and seeks us and speaks to us in His Word, hears and answers our prayers.

So we are glad. We are blessed. And we confess that Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, is our God and our Lord.