

Commentary to the 2nd Sunday of Easter - A -



The Emperor Caesar Augustus gave a citizen a magnificent jewel. The man said, "This is too much for me to accept. Caesar said, "Perhaps, but it is not too much for me to give."

Last Sunday, the Lord signaled the apostles that though they had deserted Him on Good Friday, He forgave them. Today He faxes Thomas the message He forgives him for his disbelief in the Resurrection despite reliable eyewitnesses. Put these points in your mental computer. They are important for all of us.

Jesus' followers continued to meet after Easter in the Upper Room of Last Supper fame. Since it was owned by a friend, the price was right. And good thing too. The apostles were broke. Weekly church

envelopes and second collections had not yet been invented.

Check it out that John is anxious for us to know that it was the first day of the week. If you play Sherlock Holmes, you will discover that "the first day of the week" is mentioned in the New Testament a remarkable seven times. These Christ followers wanted us to understand that Sunday had already become the Lord's Day. So, our gathering at Sunday Liturgy as a Jesus community is no accident. We have taken our cue from the apostles.

The disciples were sitting about relaxing and exchanging gossip. Perhaps they had finished celebrating the Eucharist. Their Easter dinner would be bargain Chinese take-out. Suddenly the resurrected Lord bursts into their company. Surely several of them fell off their chairs. One or two others must have clutched their hearts and put a Nitro pill under their tongue.

His "Peace be with you!" had much more punch than our limp "Have a nice day." A free translation would mean, "May God give you every wonderful good!" When you consider Jesus is divine, the apostles had to feel good all over immediately.

Thomas alone had expected the assassination of Jesus from day one. Recall the time the Christ proposed leaving His mountain hideout and going to a town where the cops were looking for Him. Eleven of the apostles ran scared and asked politely for a raincheck. Thomas alone shamed them all for being yellow by saying, "Let us all go that we may die with Him." Thomas was courageous, but he was a pessimist. The bottom line was doom and gloom.

His faith told him it would be better to die with Jesus than live without Him. His unbelief told him that once Christ died, He would remain a rotting corpse like Thomas himself.

Belief and doubt have the nasty habit of co-existing uncomfortably in our selves. If that be your secret problem, lighten up. Thomas is your main man.

When Jesus appeared Easter Sunday, Thomas was absent. Perhaps he was out looking for a job or applying for unemployment insurance or getting drunk. When his fellow apostles reported they had seen the risen Lord, he assumed they were smoking funny cigarettes or drinking cheap red wine or

both.

Thomas did not say he could not believe but rather that he was not able to believe without physical proof. Sorry, but you were not the first to say, "I believe only what I see."

Thomas made one serious mistake. He missed the Eucharist on Easter Sunday. Learn from him and never miss any Sunday Liturgy.

Jesus oftentimes sends an e-mail just for you at these occasions. Thomas of record was the last person on the block to believe in the Resurrection. But run up all the flags, for he was the first to profess absolute belief in the divinity of the risen Saviour. The cry "My Lord and my God" that came out of his gut still shouts out. It is the most celebrated two second sound bite in history and a wonderful prayer to boot.

Thomas began that second Easter Sunday by touching Jesus as friend. But, when he pulled back his hand from the wet wounds, he realized he was in touch with God Himself. Thomas was blown away by the experience. He would never be the same again.

We owe Thomas big time. His doubt is a further proof to us that the risen Christ is as physical as we are right now. All of God's closest friends - Moses, David, Abraham, Job, Thomas, etc - had doubts. They voiced them publicly. Expressing doubts is often the next level of intimacy with God. (Rick Warren)

Easter Sunday the Master forgave the apostles for running out on Him Good Friday. Today He absolves Thomas for his disbelief. He gave them all a second chance. Do you believe the resurrected Jesus will not also give you a second chance?

Forgiveness for your sins through confession may be too much for you to receive, but it is not too much for Christ to give.

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