

2nd Easter B

April 12, 2015

Thomas is the one who bravely said, "Let us go to Jerusalem and die with him!" Then, he abandoned Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane and wasn't at the foot of the Cross either. Thomas, courageous enough to be out and about on Easter Sunday night, stubborn enough not to believe at least ten people who tell him "we have seen the Lord," arrogant enough to demand that Jesus himself show him the nail marks.

I see Thomas in those who believe that only what can be measured scientifically is real. (My nephew has a doctorate in microbiology; I have no idea what he does all day. But the scientific mind is trained to demand evidence to prove.)

I see Thomas in those who believe that there is no objective truth that can be known, and that each person is the measure of reality.

Thomas is the twin of cynical and hardened people, whose first answer to everything is "no."

He is the twin of all those who do not expect God to actually do anything new in their lives, and who perhaps want to keep God at a safe distance.

And so he is also the brother of those who claim that religion is no more than a lot of rules and empty ceremonies.

Thomas surely represents those who believe that their sins are too horrible, and their past too evil, to be forgiven.

To all the Thomases of the world, and to the Thomas in each of us, Jesus responds as he did that first Sunday after Easter: with patience and mercy. Pope Francis says that *God responds to our weakness with patience!* Jesus waits seven days for Thomas to believe the others. Then, on this day—the Sunday after Easter, Jesus meets Thomas. And Jesus looks at him with mercy. Pope Francis writes that Jesus comes to us “with a caress of love.”

And here we also, one week after Easter. Jesus is here waiting for us: for those of us who wonder if He is real; those of us who fear to follow; those of us who have had a bad experience of Church; those of us who have fallen so short.

Just before Communion, when the priest lifts up the chalice, filled with the Blood of Christ; and the consecrated Bread, now the Body of Christ, we watch, we look. But is not the Christ also looking at each of us with mercy? Is he not also gazing at each of us with love?