

In Sunday's Gospel reading, we hear the story of "Doubting Thomas." To be fair, Thomas was not the only one who had difficulty after Jesus' death on the Cross. John tells us that the disciples had locked the doors where they were, out of fear for what might happen to them.

When we hear Thomas' reaction to the disciples' news that they have seen the risen Jesus, we may wonder why he doubts their word. I don't think it is the same fear that caused the other disciples to lock the doors. When we read the Gospel reading about Jesus and Lazarus a few weeks ago, it was Thomas who said to the other apostles, "Let us also go to die with him" (John 11:16). For me, Thomas doubts because he is afraid to be hurt again. Whatever hopes he had about Jesus were dashed when he saw him crucified, and he doesn't want to go through that again. So he can't bring himself to believe that there still might be hope.

When Jesus appears to the disciples, He comes to them despite the fact that the doors are locked. The second time He comes to Thomas despite his doubts. The reality of Easter tells us that Jesus can overcome any obstacles there might be, even the ones we put up ourselves. The love Jesus has for us has overcome sin and death! It can overcome our grief. It can overcome our fears. It can overcome our despair. It can overcome our doubts. It can overcome our shame. It can even overcome our unwillingness to follow Him!

At those times when we are overwhelmed by fear or anxiety or grief and sorrow, we need to do what Thomas was invited to do. Jesus is calling to us: "Touch my wounds, and know that I understand your woundedness! See me, risen from the dead, and know there can be a resurrection in your life! Know my love for you, and follow me!"

In our first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, Luke presents us with a picture of the early church that seems too good to be true. Perhaps it is. In our capitalist, consumerist society, it seems unreal for people to have things in common, or to divide their property so that each one's needs are met. It seems too radical a leap. But if believing that the Son of God would sacrifice Himself so that our sins are forgiven, and then would rise from the dead to give us the promise of everlasting life is not too radical, then how is it *too* radical to share His love to the utmost?

Once Jesus breaks through our defenses, it becomes easier to surrender to His love and His call. As Jesus says to Thomas, blessed are we who believe even though we haven't seen Him, and are willing to follow Him, through the Cross and on to Easter.

May God continue to bless us all, and may we listen to His call.

In Christ,

Fr. Phil, CP