

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTERTIDE (C) 2022

A) DOUBTING DISCIPLES

- Some people have claimed that the Gospels are a complete fable,
- That the Gospel stories, especially the story of the Resurrection of Jesus, just aren't true
- but if it is all a pure invention, then whoever made it up was not very clever.
- Because the disciples are presented in such an unfavourable light
- Wouldn't it be more sensible to present the followers of this Jesus as people who believed in him from the very beginning, who followed him faithfully, even to his death, and who recognised him and accepted him immediately when he appeared to them after his resurrection?
- And yet that is not what we read
- Jesus told his disciples several times that he would suffer, and die and rise again
- But they constantly failed to understand what he meant
- They all professed loyalty to him before his passion, but almost everyone of them let him down and abandoned him when his sufferings began
- And when he appeared to various people after his resurrection, the disciples refused to accept their testimony
- Thomas was not the only disciple who doubted: they all did.
- The women, it seems, were much more ready to recognise and to believe.
- But the very fact that the disciples did doubt, for me, makes their testimony all the more convincing: yes, it is true!

B) UNIQUENESS OF THE RESURRECTION

- Perhaps we should not be too hard on the disciples who doubted
- Would we have fared any better?
- After all, the rising of someone from the dead had never happened before
- It goes completely against our knowledge and experience of life
- In spite of Jesus trying to prepare them before his death, they were completely unprepared
- They were astonished, incredulous, and unable to accept the evidence of their eyes
- And Jesus chides them for their lack of belief
- But even so, he meets them where they are
- He gives them tangible proofs
- He lets them touch him
- He eats something in their presence
- above all, He shows them his wounds
- Yes, it really is the same Jesus they had known and loved and lost
- And found again

- And so Thomas is doing exactly what the rest of them had done
- And asked for unmistakable proofs
- He did not want to believe just on someone else's say so; he wanted to be able to believe for himself; And he does
- His great act of faith becomes the faith of the Easter community: My Lord and my God

C) HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN

- One characteristic of the appearances of Jesus is that they are so short
- when Jesus meets Mary Magdalene in the Easter Garden, he tells her not to cling to him
- when he reveals himself to the disciples in their home in Emmaus, he instantly disappears...and so on.
- he is gradually withdrawing his physical presence from them
- from then on he will be known, not in his physical, visible self, but by faith
- in that way he will be far more accessible, no longer limited by having to exist in just one place and one time
- rather he will be present by faith, to all generations, everywhere
- and so Jesus says to Thomas:
You believe because you can see me;
Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.
- Jesus is reassuring all those countless generations of Christians, including ourselves, who have never met Jesus in the flesh, who have not seen him or heard or touched him
- can we believe without seeing the Lord for ourselves?
- the story of doubting Thomas tells us that it is possible to believe in Christ without having seen him
- yes, we are able to know him thorough the witness of the Apostles
- to know him through the witness of the Gospel writers
- to know him through the example of all those who have followed him down through the ages
- and to know him through the gift of the Holy Spirit, living in us, guiding us and inspiring us.
- Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe