

**SUNDAY April 12, 2026      “Do you Have Doubts?”**  
**Acts 2: 14, 22-32, I Peter 1:3-9 Gospel: John 20: 19-31**

What do you do when you are not sure? Despair, disorientation, uncertainty, we all have these thoughts in our everyday lives. This is because we wonder about what the world will be like tomorrow. Many people around the world were not sure whether they would survive the threats of bombs, missiles, and attacks even this week and the world seemed to breathe again as a ceasefire was declared. Others might have felt that they were alone in their sicknesses, with no friends and are isolated only looking through a window and seeing their reflection. Still others question news stories coming out more like tabloid attention getters without any real truth or substance. There is doubt all around us but what might be done about it?

There is a story about a cargo ship which caught fire and sank with only one sailor who survived. He got into a lifeboat, rigged a sail and then turned upwards to see the stars. As a sailor, he navigated by the stars and he knew them. He set the course on which way to sail in order to head home. Exhausted he fell asleep. Clouds rolled in while he slept but not only for one night- but 20 consecutive nights. He could not see the stars. He thought he was on course not knowing for certain. But as the days continued, the sailor wasted away. He began to have doubts. Was he on his way home, or was he horribly lost? What was going to happen to him? He had doubts.

Doubts can be a powerful bond as certainty and sustaining as certainty. But when you are lost, you are not alone. But when you are lost and doubting who you are or where you are, there is something that calls you to act in a new way. Such is the story of the disciples on the Day of Christ's Resurrection.

The disciples are in the house together with the doors locked for fear of the Jews. After the early morning excitement with Mary and the disciples running back and forth to the empty tomb and to where they had gathered they went home. Yet later in the evening they gathered again. Doors were locked and they were fearful for what had occurred would be and could be traced to them as having taken Jesus' body and claimed they saw him alive. But suddenly Jesus stands among them. He shows them his hands, and his side. They wait for those few seconds to let what they see sink in.. they believe-- they rejoice. And then Jesus says, "Peace be with you." As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' Then he breathed on them and blessed them offering to them the Holy Spirit.

We don't know what Jesus did during the day after seeing Mary at the tomb until he saw the disciples in the evening. But we do know that when Jesus did come to them, one of the disciples was not there- Thomas. We don't know how long Jesus was with them in the locked room either.

All we do know is that at some point that evening, Thomas shows up. The other disciples tell him what happened and Thomas declares “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.

The disciples gathered the following week and all were present. Again the doors were locked and Jesus came and stood among them. He offered the peace he gives to all. Then he turns to Thomas and said put your finger here and your hand here. Do not doubt but believe. Thomas answered him, “My Lord and My God.” “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe?”

In our civil society we have the use of words to describe various levels of what is known as certainty. Believe/ know/ think/ are often the verbs used to share with another the level of certainty of information being accurate. *Believe: something true, real, a fact Think: to have an opinion or an idea Know: to have information on your mind*

Yet often these words are used intermittingly which often just leads to doubt. And as Charles Bukowski, a prolific underground writer who depicted the depravity of urban life and the downtrodden society states: *The problem with the world is that the intelligent people are full of doubts while the stupid ones are full of confidence.* The question then we might ask is whether we should have some doubt and certainty at the same time or a means by which we can share and show our convictions to others. And we are called to do this with clarity.

And this is the problem that Jesus picks up about Thomas. Thomas wants certainty, that is to erase all doubts about Jesus being alive or not. And for Thomas, he needs to physically touch the wounds- hand and sides to make it clear in his mind that this is really the one who was on the cross, who died and was buried and is alive again. Whenever this story is shared one might wonder, do you think he really meant for Jesus to come back a week later and prove himself? Yet Jesus returns and using Thomas’ words- he has him put his hand on his hand and side.

If I were Thomas I might have been beyond words-- Jesus returned to prove himself to this one disciple in the way he wanted to be seen? One can only imagine what Thomas thought after Jesus left. Was he questioning the Risen Christ for who he is? Or was he going beyond self-doubts and asking: “I know that you believe you understand what you think I said, but, I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant”? What was Thomas so uncertain about? whether Jesus died, or whether he was alive? Why didn’t he believe the others who saw him?

Today people find it difficult to believe others... I know it gets annoying when I am asked again and again, ‘Really?’ after stating information that the other person is not aware of, knowing or wanting to know. This might be because there is so much information available on the internet, on streaming services, on phones --technology takes over and the human who is to look at this

plethora of information is lost in trying to navigate it all. But what do we really need to know, think and believe?

Our legal system works toward a high standard of proof in criminal cases. Reasonable doubt requires a jury or judge to be firmly convinced of a defendant's guilt, with no logical, evidence-based hesitation. It does not require absolute certainty, but it must be more than an imaginary, frivolous, or speculative doubt. There is a fine line between guilty and not guilty but the onus is on the lawyers to clarify the line to one side or the other and convince the jury and/ judge.

Thomas definitely doubted the words of Mary, the other women, the disciples and even himself that is until he could touch Jesus. He knew that Jesus had died. He was with the disciples hiding when all of the story of Jesus' passion and death was playing out in the streets of Jerusalem and on the Calvary hill. He was buried according to the Jewish customs. He along with the other disciples had been afraid of what might occur if the Jews found them.

This is in contrast to what Peter wrote to the faithful people dispersed through the region. He encourages to be genuine in their faith. He writes, "Although you have not seen him, you love him, and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls." Peter recognizes that in their current circumstances, that they love Jesus, they believe in him and have received salvation through him.

In this moment do you have doubts? Of any sort? What causes us to doubt? And do these causes also limit our ability to dream of what might be? Doubt kills more dreams than failure ever will. Yet it is natural to have doubts, but what truly matters is how quickly and effectively we address them. Thomas stated his need to see and touch Jesus when the disciples told him that He was there. A week later-- Thomas' need was met.

But what about your doubts right now? Do you believe, think, know Jesus rose from death and is alive? How do you know? What enables you to go beyond reason that the Son of God is alive? As faithful followers of Jesus, we believe that Christ rose from death and this is the foundational truth of Christianity, often regarded as the most essential aspect of faith because it signifies victory over death, sin, and the grave. Life is nothing without Jesus but we need to move past any doubt and know that we are not alone. Like the sailor drifting in the water, the stars did come out and he made his way back home. But for us, it is the glory of the Risen Christ, the Prince of life in whom we believe. We sing " *No more we doubt Thee, glorious Prince of life!!* Life is nought without Thee; aid us in our strife;" because we think, know, and believe that Christ's Spirit is with us, just like he breathed on the disciples and shared his peace with them. What does this mean for us in this moment? It means that yes we can have doubts about a lot of

things in this world. but to have faith in Jesus as the Risen Christ leads us to endless joy. This is the promise of God in Christ our Saviour as the Spirit leads and guides us.

#### PRAYER

God of Love we thank you for Jesus Christ our Risen Saviour. Help us to believe and to help our unbelief of who he is and can be in our lives. We pray O God that you would show us your way as we live with doubts, with dreams and with the knowledge that we have no reason to doubt for you are always with us. Hear us now as we pray ...Amen.