

**You know...sometimes I think Thomas gets a bad rap!  
Even today...to be called a doubting Thomas is not a compliment...  
People call some one when they think the other person is too skeptical  
or not trusting enough...**

**Even Jesus seems to be not happy with Thomas:  
“Have you believed because you have seen me?  
you can almost here him going: “tsk, tsk ....”  
Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”**

**Personally...I like Thomas...I appreciate his skepticism...  
You know that old adage: ‘it it seems to good to be true, it probably is!’  
I think there is a lot of truth in it...**

**Thomas wants to see for himself...he’s not willing to follow blindly...  
I guess I see that as a positive thing...**

**But back then, in the late first century in John’s community,  
believing the word of others was very important and very valued...**

**During this time, those in John’s community were being persecuted for their beliefs...  
all of the original believers, those who had personally known Jesus had died...  
so to have a personal encounter with the pre-Resurrection Jesus,  
pre-crucifixion Jesus was no longer possible...  
Did that mean then, that one HAD to believe the word of others?...  
is that what Jesus is saying?  
well, actually it isn’t!**

**I hope you noticed a detail that was mentioned twice in our reading:  
both times when Jesus appeared to the disciples,**

the doors to the room in which the disciples were in, were locked.  
That means that whatever happened in the room those two times,  
who they saw, while they recognized something familiar enough to say it was Jesus...  
he was not the same man that they had known before...  
Jesus did not come back to the old way of being alive...  
yet he was still lived in a totally new way...  
and the way that people could know that it was he who was still alive  
was not by seeing him and touching him...  
but by *experiencing*, for themselves: his Peace,

Perhaps you joined us for Easter service last weekend...  
Our reading that day, from the Gospel of Matthew  
said that Jesus wished upon those who had seen him  
not just Peace, but Shalom!  
Shalom is Peace, but it is also a wish for the happiness of the other..  
It is the desire that the other person experience all that is good in life,  
all that is beautiful, true and necessary for a fulfilling and joyous life....  
Both Gospel writers: John and Matthew say the same thing:  
To experience the Risen Jesus,  
it is not necessary to see or touch something physical...  
To experience the risen Jesus, rather,  
is to really experience, not just to believe in our heads  
but to really experience in our bodies ...  
the presence of joy, forgiveness, gratitude and love...  
which then leads to an inner peace that the world can not give...

The Resurrection of Jesus...,  
that which occurred almost 2,000 years ago  
and that which we celebrated just last Sunday...  
has been inviting humanity to take seriously the spiritual dimension of life...

**Celebrating Easter ...believing in the Resurrection of Jesus  
is an invitation to see become aware of the totality of life:  
the physical, visible universe and the energetic non visible universe...**

**It is time to take the Resurrection seriously...**

**It's time to believe, really believe, that life continues after death.**

**That life is transformed and never destroyed...**

**It is time to truly believe that death is merely a passage way  
to a new way of being alive.**

**How would that change your life if you knew and really believed that death  
was a transition and not an end?**

**That life continues not in some far away distant place that we have called  
heaven, but that life continues here and now....just differently...**

**Would it change the way you live?**

**Would it change the way that you love?**

**Believing in the continuance of life beyond this life...**

**has all the power to re-orientate our priorities...**

**to shift our minds and hearts from fear and worry, doubt and skepticism  
to joy and peace...**

**The disciples locked themselves in the house because they were afraid...**

**Thomas was there because he was skeptical!**

**Why are we there?**

**What is keeping us from seeing and believing the Risen Jesus?**

**Whatever it is, be it fear or skepticism or whatever...**

**Jesus passes through all of that and offers to us  
as he did to them:**

**Peace! Shalom...Amen...**