

John 20: 24-31

But Thomas, (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.

So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’

But he said to the, ‘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.’

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them.

Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’

Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side.

So do not doubt but believe.

‘Thomas answered him:

‘My Lord and my God!’

Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me?

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.’”

Meditation

Do you believe the Easter story?

Do you believe in the Resurrection of Jesus?

You know, I started this meditation over and over again,

trying to figure out what needed to be said.

And I kept coming back to that one paragraph:

“A week later his disciples were again in the house,
and Thomas was with them.

Although the doors were shut,

Jesus came and stood among them and said,

‘Peace be with you.’”

Did you notice that the doors were shut?

Some scholars believe the doors were not simply closed but locked.

So...how did Jesus get in?

That detail just blows my mind...

Jesus could not be alive after death the same way he was before death
because human persons do not simply walk through locked doors.

Now...let's just let that sink in!

I would suggest that we modern people are just so used to
beautiful religious art showing Jesus all clean and smiling
in a whiter than white robe,

that we have lost the staggering, mind blowing reality of Easter...

That something happened to Jesus after he died

that allowed his friends to experience his presence...

But that he wasn't instantly recognizable.

Do you remember the story when the two disciples were walking to Emmaus,
all depressed and dejected because Jesus had been crucified...

They had heard from others that he had risen,

but they did not yet believe what they heard...

they didn't believe it until they recognized him because their hearts were burning as he explained the scriptures to them...

or how about Mary of Magdala meeting the risen Jesus and thinking he was the gardener??

She didn't recognize him until he called her by name..

and then recognition and love gushed forth from Mary, spontaneously without a why or a how...

His ancient disciples and closest friends had mysterious encounters with the risen Jesus which left a many more questions than answers to be sure...

but these experiences also triggered unimaginable courage, joy and love within them...

and they finally knew, in their hearts...

not simply believing with their brains...

that death does not destroy life.

and that is a –if not the—most essential and profound truth of our Christian inheritance....

Believing what other people tell us is good...I'm not saying that it isn't.

And it is where most of us start in our relationship with God...

But if we only go as far as repeating the beliefs of others..

we will not experience the transformative power of the mystery of Love

And once we have a real experience...we cannot deny it....

But what is a real experience of the Risen Christ?

Well...that seems to vary according to what we need.

**In our reading today, Thomas thought he needed to put his hand into Jesus' side, and Jesus actually invited him to do so,
but as far as we know, Thomas never did**

Apparently all he needed to do was experience his risen Lord.....

**So the important question for us this day is:
What do we need to experience the Risen Christ????**

I honestly think we 21st century people have a harder time with believing in the Resurrection...and not because it is so long after the historical event but we have a harder time because we are so scientific and rational... yet that is exactly why we need the Easter Story...

The Easter story is the invitation to take the spiritual dimension of life seriously.

We do not have to deny the physical realities we all know to be true... but the Easter story does invite us to open our hearts *and our minds* to bigger and fuller reality.

The Easter story 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
has a spiritual and material component to it...**

**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.**

**It's time to believe that there is an energetic non visible universe
and that the most important things in life
are those that can be felt with our hearts.**

Do you know what makes your heart feel alive?

Do you know what gives you courage, joy and peace?

Do you know notice your heart aching when someone is suffering?

That is the presence of the Risen Lord

**waiting, hoping, that you recognize the Mystery of the Divine
in your life.**

**Easter isn't just an ancient story that we retell every year,
but Easter happens over and over again,
each time we find new life within ourselves,
within our every day, very ordinary lives.**

**Easter happens every time we forgive someone else...
because we rise from anger and hurt into a new life of freedom ...**

**Easter happens every time we offer comfort or care...
because we rise from a feeling of scarcity
into a new awareness of abundance...**

Easter happens every time we notice beauty and joy...

**because we rise from the belief of ugliness and sorrow
into a new attitude of gratitude**

**Ahh..yes, my friends, I do believe the Easter story
because it is happens when we show up and are willing to
experience what we have been told...**

**Death has no power because Life never ends...
and Love never fails...
and for that we sing: Glory Alleluia!!
Amen.**