

Saturday/Sunday, April 14,15, 2012
The Second Sunday of Easter, Year B, RCL
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St. Barnabas and Christ Church

My house may not look like I want order in my life, but I do. I like it when things make sense, when the world makes sense and I can understand it – I like the process of organizing life in a way that brings clarity and order.

Science, math, and medicine are certainly about organizing data. The data is what provides the proof that leads to the answers. Just like following the clues in a mystery novel will allow you to solve a mystery.

Faith, I have heard it said is a mystery of the heart that the mind wants to solve.

To say we believe something by faith means that we are willing, at some level, to live with the notion that not all things in life can be solved. That, with faith, you may never have all the indisputable data you desire.

And still all of us who walk by faith continue to seek evidence to bolster and sustain our faith. We search for the proof that solves the mystery.

So who do you believe? Do you believe everything you see on the news? Do you have friends who you always take at their word. Do you have authors you believe and some you do not trust?

Thomas is always presented to me as a hero on the Second Sunday of Easter. We have just been through an amazing journey through Holy Week. We have walked the Way off the cross, the way of sorrow. We have read and wept at the foot of the cross. We have kept Vigil with the women at the tomb. And we have joyously proclaimed the Resurrection on Easter morning.

Thomas most likely witnessed all this personally. He may have deserted Christ at the cross but he knew of Jesus' fate.

So one week out from our Easter celebration with our minds heavy with income taxes, work schedules, chores to be done, family concerns, worries and the weight of everyday life we take comfort in Thomas's doubt. He was in the middle of it all and yet he doubted.

John's gospel tackles the question people had on their minds in that day and time. It is still an important and valuable question of our day. How do we encourage people to believe in Jesus when Jesus is no longer present to be seen or touched. And John uses Thomas's story to become our story.

Thomas was the disciple who at the last supper when Jesus says to his friends, "be not afraid for you know the way I am going," Thomas replies, " Lord we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"

Some say he was a true skeptic. He might have been the guy who when told there really are UFO's would have said, until I see one for myself I will remain skeptical.

John understood Thomas's reluctance to believe even when all 10 of his friends declared together they had seen and touched the risen Lord. Jesus must have understood this also because he didn't dismiss Thomas for his lack of faith, instead he returns at a time when Thomas is present and lets him see and touch firsthand.

But what about us? Does this leave us out of the story because we will never have the chance to lay our eyes or hands on an actual flesh and blood Jesus?

In John's story as Thomas is given the joy of seeing Jesus face to face, Jesus says to him....."Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.

There we are....planted right in the story, given consideration and a part in the story.

Those disciples were given such a weighty task to proclaim by word and deed what they knew for fact. They knew it was up to them to keep Jesus alive...to tell the stories of Jesus to their children and their children's children so that all would participate in the joy of Jesus. We are part of that weighty responsibility too.

Jesus says clearly today through the Gospel of John that seeing is believing but so is hearing. Scripture, the word, is the vehicle through which we continue to know and experience the power of Jesus. Only a few were lucky enough to see Jesus in the flesh but millions upon millions of people all over the world have come to know him, not in flesh, but in the stories.

**Have you seen Jesus? Have I seen Jesus? In the flesh, NO but in you...YES....in this community...YES
In the stories always.**