

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Second Sunday of Easter — April 7, 2024

*“Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin,
was not with them when Jesus came.”*

– John 20:24 –

Perhaps Thomas should have believed; after all Jesus told them that He would die and rise again. Jesus comforted them with the promise that He would not abandon them. There were witnesses to the risen Lord. The Roman guards were frightened. The women saw the empty tomb. Peter and John confirmed their story. Mary met Jesus in the garden. Two followers met Jesus on the road to Emmaus. The disciples saw Jesus in the Upper Room. Why should Thomas have doubted? He doubted because he was separated from the fellowship of believers.

We call him “Doubting Thomas” as if his doubts are worse than those of the other disciples, but did they believe at first? Did they believe the women? What did Peter and John believe when they found the empty tomb: that Jesus was alive, or that His body was missing? When Jesus first entered the room, they thought He was a ghost. They had to see the proof, too. Thomas tried to deal with the loss of Jesus on his own; he left the fellowship of believers and missed experiencing the Living Christ. We experience the presence of Christ in the fellowship of believers.

Thomas was not there and he missed it all. He missed the appearance of Jesus and the giving of the Holy Spirit. He missed the words of peace that helped the others overcome their fear and grief. He was apart from the body and he could not believe until he had an encounter with the living Christ. Jesus did not chase after Thomas; He waited for Thomas to return to the fellowship of believers. When Thomas saw Jesus, he made the true confession: “My Lord and my God!” Thomas was again in fellowship with the other disciples and together they learned how to be apostles so that they could carry on His work.

In the story of Thomas we see how important it is to be part of the body of Christ. We can’t do it alone; we will doubt if we are separated from the fellowship of believers. We need the Church to believe. We experience Jesus through the witness of those first disciples, including Doubting Thomas, and through the witness of all Christians that came before us. The Holy Spirit blesses us with the faith and hope to be witnesses beside them.

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