

'ARE WE LIKE THOMAS?' - HOMILY – 23 APRIL 2017 - 2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Have you ever missed a meeting?

Have you ever had that experience that you have really missed something important?

That the minutes of the meeting summarise the words but not the experience?

And when you talk to some, who were at the meeting, you know that you have missed out.

We don't know why Thomas missed the first meeting with the Risen Christ.

Was he visiting relatives? Doing the shopping? Grieving privately? Doing a job for someone?

We don't know.

Was it a meeting? More an encounter.

At their first encounter with the Risen Jesus, we hear these words of Jesus:

"Peace be with you."

'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.'

'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained'

HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE THE GIVING AND RECEIVING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

HOW DO WE DESCRIBE THE RECEIVING OF PEACE OF THE RISEN CHRIST?

Thomas missed the encounter, and didn't believe the disciples when they told him about it.

Not only did Thomas not believe them, but he can't explain the remarkable difference in the disciples since they have received the Holy Spirit.

Thomas said,

'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.'

Thomas makes no mention of the change in manner of the disciples.

Doesn't he see the change?

Or are his own doubts preventing him from seeing the dramatic change in the other disciples?

IN LIFE, ARE WE LIKE THOMAS?

A RECENT MEETING WHERE TWO PARISH MEMBERS, DAVID & KAREEM, PRESENTED

1. DAVID

David introduced some of the ways and issues behind the current move in Australia for Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP).

He shared his own experiences and spirituality as an Aboriginal Elder and his efforts for reconciliation.

2. KAREEM

Kareem opened up discussion on the new Iraqi and Syrian family arrivals to northern Brisbane in the past eleven months.

He helped people to appreciate the journeys the families have made. And the practical ways of making them welcome.

Both David and Kareem brought **GOOD NEWS**.

They took it beyond a meeting. It became **AN ENCOUNTER**.

WHEN WE ARE LISTENING TO NEW EXPERIENCES, ARE WE LIKE THOMAS? DO WE DOUBT OTHERS?

In the disciples' second encounter with Jesus in the house, the gathered people could hear firsthand the words of Jesus:

'Peace be with you.'

'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side.

Do not doubt but believe.'

'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

WHY AREN'T WE MORE DEEPLY RECONCILED IN AUSTRALIA WITH OUR INDIGENOUS SISTERS AND BROTHERS? IS IT BECAUSE WE ARE LIKE THOMAS?

- By doubting their culture, wisdom, spirituality?
- We have to see to believe?
- We have to experience their culture before we believe and reconcile???

WHAT WAS IT LIKE FOR THE OTHER DISCIPLES WHEN THOMAS DOUBTED THEM? WHAT HAS IT BEEN LIKE FOR OUR INDIGENOUS SISTERS AND BROTHERS WHEN WE DOUBTED THEM? WHAT HAS IT BEEN LIKE FOR REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS WHEN WE DOUBTED THEM?

TODAY'S GOSPEL PASSAGE GIVES US GREAT HOPE

Though Thomas misses the first encounter, Jesus reaches out to him in the 2nd house encounter.

JESUS REACHES OUT TO US AS WELL

Whether in our efforts for deeper Reconciliation with Indigenous Australians,
Or in understanding the traumatic journey of our newly arrived Iraqi and Syrian families and their rich and ancient Catholic and Orthodox traditions,
Or in facing any of the challenges we face today in Australian society,
Or in accepting our mission in caring for the earth, our common home,
Jesus reaches out to us with hope.

Jesus did not give up on Thomas.

Jesus came back to the community and addressed his unbelief.

With the hope from our encounters with Jesus in community and personally,
Let us pray about the challenges and opportunities we face.

As Jesus says to Thomas"

'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side'

WHERE DO WE NEED TO PLACE OUR FINGER TODAY?

WHERE DO WE NEED TO SEE THE HANDS OF JESUS WORKING IN OUR WORLD NOW?

WHERE DO WE NEED TO REACH OUT TO THE SIDE OF JESUS IN OUR WOUNDED WORLD TODAY?

Let us pray about the wounds of our world and their healing through Jesus.

As the disciples had locked themselves in the room because of fear,
We pray that Jesus enters into our fears today and heals and frees us to love.

The last phrase of today's gospel says,

"And that through believing you may have life in his name."

Through believing, let us have life in Jesus.
Alleluia.

Later this week Pope Francis visits Egypt.

Let us pray for healing and safety.

Our prayer is in the parish newsletter, our Facebook page and [Webpage](#).

<http://bit.ly/PrayerForFrancis>

Fr Gerry

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – Easter - 23 April 2017]

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/042317.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook23042017>]