

'THOMAS ENCOUNTERS JESUS' - HOMILY – 8 APRIL 2018

2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER

WITH SO MUCH HAPPENING

- On Monday, **Pope Francis** releases his teaching document on Holiness and we will cover it during the week on our Parish Webpage and Facebook
- Yesterday was a wonderful celebration of **Sarah and Braden's love** during their wedding, and a very special moment too in honouring their parents
- And school holidays!!
- And of course, the unfolding of the **2018 Commonwealth Games**

SURPRISES | DELVENE COCKATOO-COLLINS

Having helped many young people in their journey to self-esteem and belief in their future, **Delvene Cockatoo-Collins** has listened to them in their moments of doubt and been present as they work through their life issues.

A spiritual and gentle person, she moves into the unknown.

An Aboriginal person from **MINJERRIBAH** (Stradbroke Island) and an artist, her work has taken on special meaning with the **2018 Commonwealth Games**.

Each task has led to an unexpected new creative task during the preparation.

From some input into designing some of the costumes,

To designing the Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals,

To designing the Commonwealth Games medallion

To her laser light patterns for Migaloo, the white whale.

And the joy of her mother and aunt and son and other family members sharing their presence joyfully in the Opening Ceremony.

Life didn't end for Delvene with a sports injury as a teenager many years ago.

Her designs come from an inner joy.

THOMAS

Today in the Gospel of John, we hear how Jesus is present to Thomas.

Thomas doubts, yet by the time John's Gospel is written decades later.

Thomas is a legend.

Ask any of our parish members from India or Iraq, Pakistan or Syria, about the mission of Thomas. They can tell us.

Today's Gospel reminds us that life does not end with our embarrassments and our failures and our excuses.

We gain the spiritual strength to work through these moments and continue our journey with Jesus.

We can be **tempted to give up**,

yet there is the **conviction** that God calls us forward.

Life didn't end for Thomas with his doubt and embarrassment.

Thomas goes on after the ascension of Jesus,

to preaching the Good News of Jesus.

With a deep inner joy, Thomas meets the challenges and trials of life.

Last year we reflected on Thomas.

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’***

ENCOUNTER

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 ignores the remarkable difference in the disciples since they received the Holy Spirit.

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

HOW CAN THOMAS MISS THE DRAMATIC CHANGE FROM MOURNING, FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY TO JOY AND WONDER?

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.’***

In the disciples' second encounter with Jesus in the house, and the first encounter of Thomas with the Risen Christ, the gathered disciples 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.’***

TODAY'S GOSPEL PASSAGE GIVES US GREAT HOPE

Though Thomas misses the first encounter, Jesus still reaches out to him in the second house encounter. Jesus does not ignore us.

JESUS REACHES OUT TO US

Whether in our efforts for **deeper Reconciliation** with Indigenous Australians, or being **more inclusive** in church and society - two themes of this Commonwealth Games.

- or in understanding the traumatic journey of our newly arrived **Iraqi and Syrian** families
- or in facing any of the **challenges** we face today in Australian society, (pause – as we name some of these challenges)
- 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.

Thomas went on to witness the love of God to other cultures.

Jesus came back to the community and addressed the unbelief of Thomas.

With the hope gained **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”

WOUNDED

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.

[Pause: as we name some of the wounds we feel in ourselves]

[Pause: as we name some of the wounds in our world]

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.

May we find time this week to soak up the insights of Pope Francis on **holiness** today.

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. Alleluia.

Fr Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/040818.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook08042018>]

[Earlier Facebook post: <http://bit.ly/DelveneCG2018Medals>]

#OPYOE2018

#OurParishYearofEncounter2018

Painting: 'The Doubting Thomas' by Carl Bloch, Public Domain

GOSPEL OF JOHN

"Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

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

Fr. Gerry Hefferan

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