

Sunday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007  
The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter

John 20:19-31  
Believe!

Well, it is the Sunday after Easter, as you can easily tell by all of the vacant seats compared to just a week ago. It makes me wonder if Thomas would even come back the next week to see if Jesus was risen. After all, there are tons of folks who call themselves Christians who only show up at Christmas and Easter. They show up to hear of his birth and to hear of his resurrection, and then they are gone, never to darken our doors again.

But in their own way, I think that they are the Thomases of our modern Easter story. They know the story, they should know what is happening, but do they really believe?

After all, our good friend Thomas had been with Jesus and the disciples the entire time. He knew the stories, he had heard the parables, he had seen the healings, and he had spent much time with Jesus and the rest of the twelve. Yet, he isn't there on that first Easter. For whatever reason, Thomas is not in the upper room with the rest of the disciples when Jesus appears to them. The others tell him what they have seen, but he declares that he will not believe them until he can put his fingers in the holes left by the nails and his hand into the side of Jesus. A rather gruesome way to prove that the resurrection is real, don't you think?

But I'm not sure Thomas is looking for the gross out factor. I think that Thomas is looking for the same thing as our C and E friends, or our twice a year Christians. I believe that Thomas wants to see that it is really Jesus, and that the identity of the Risen Christ is defined by the suffering and woundedness of Christ. Thomas wants to put his fingers in the hands and his hand in the side to make sure that the Christ who is risen is the Christ who went to the cross out of his amazing love for us. Thomas wants to see that the wounded Christ is risen. Thomas wants to know that the sign of new life bears the bruises of every day life and of the old life.

And this is just what our friends and neighbors want to know as well. This is what our C&E friends want to know. They want to see the body of Christ as well. They want to see that the body of Christ is broken and bruised, punctured and battered, and yet it lives, aware of its wounds, aware of the cost. Yet the body of Christ they look to is not the physical body of Jesus, it is the church that bears his name. We are the body of Christ they are looking at. And they want to see that we understand the cost of the resurrection and the cost of new life. They want to see that we understand that we cannot sing

“Jesus loves the little children of the world,  
red and yellow, black and white,  
they are precious in his sight,  
Jesus loves the little children of the world”

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if we are racists, or if we are willing to turn the fire hoses on those children of the world simple because they are red or yellow, black or white. They want to see a body of Christ that knows it is hurting, that knows it has sinned and done wrong, that knows that the gospel is a calling that requires sacrifice and pain, and sometimes even death before new life is revealed.

They are like Thomas. They want to see the cost of new life, and that the body knows the cost. They want to see that we know what it is to be wounded and broken, for they are wounded and broken. Thomas and they, Thomas and we, want to see that the love of God is greater than the pain of life and even death, and that God's love brings new life to conquer even death.

And so, like Thomas, people come looking for the body of Christ. Not the beautiful one, but the one that shows the cost of being God to a broken world. Not the perfect Body of Christ, but one that has the scars and the wounds of being in the world. And now we are called to be that body.

And it is scary. But isn't it more powerful to imagine the day that people will see the Body of Christ and be able to proclaim with Thomas, "My Lord and My God!"