

## **SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER – TRUST IN GOD’S LOVE**

Today’s Gospel is about ‘doubting Thomas’. When Jesus appeared to his disciples on the first Easter Sunday evening, Thomas was absent. When he returned, he refused to believe his fellow disciples when they told him that Jesus had appeared to them. But then Jesus appeared again and Thomas was present. Thomas had to put his hand into Jesus’s side to prove it was really Jesus and then he uttered the famous statement: ‘My Lord and My God’.

In the Gospel we can fully sympathize with Thomas. With the rest of Jesus’ disciples he had been through the mill. Jesus had promised them the world and he had been brutally killed and was buried. The disciples’ lives were in danger so they were huddled together in fear. It was a time of utter despair.

When death and grieving are all round us, we can be like Thomas. We are all at sea, afraid of our lives, and of what the future will bring. During this time of uncertainty and suffering in our world it’s no wonder that we are like the disciples, asking ‘where is God in all this’.

We have heard the saying ‘the darkest hour is just before the dawn’. Without the darkness of Good Friday there could not have been the joy of Easter Sunday; as St. Luke says: ‘ought not Christ to have suffered these things and, by that very means, enter his Glory’. It was the death of Christ that gave birth to new hope, to new life for humankind.

This death/resurrection theme points to the pattern of how things evolve in our world - winter is a prelude to springtime, the darkness of night gives way to the light of day, the pangs of childbirth lead to the arrival of new life. And this seems to be the pattern in our own lives too - certainly, I have seen it often in my own life. It is through uprooting and suffering that growth and transformation takes place. And perhaps this is what is happening at this time. We see the buddings of renewal that Covid-19 is bringing about in society – people are becoming more caring, more compassionate, more generous, more self-sacrificing. We Christians ought to rejoice in this, and be at the vanguard of this transformation – for the values that are emerging are exactly the values that Christ lived for and died for. And this crisis, too, is bringing about another aspect of spiritual renewal; it is making us acutely aware of our own helplessness, of our dependence on God to overcome an Enemy that we can’t control, and find it very hard to defeat.

Each morning I offer Mass for all in the parish, that God will keep us all safe and trusting. I pray also for those who are mourning the death of loved ones, and for all whose lives have, in so many different ways, become unstable and difficult – that trust in a loving and caring God will become more alive in our hearts. I am praying also that this crisis will soon end, and that through it God will bring us back not just to ‘normal’ life again, but to a saner, more humane way of living – to a way that is more caring, more generous, more God-filled.

Together in Christ

**Fr. Frank**