

John Bonner
 April 15, 2007
 Easter 2 C

Thomas and the Church

“Grant that all who have been reborn into the fellowship of Christ’s body may show forth in their lives what they profess by their faith;”

It is the work of the Church, “the new covenant of reconciliation”. It all starts, as it did for Thomas and the apostles, in a belief ‘in’ and commitment to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Easter is when all the old rules and ‘laws’ are put aside, for a new covenant now exists between Christ and His Church. We are to love uncommonly. We are to worship uncommonly. We are to be Christ to the world. This season of Easter is when all things are made new and a new work has begun. Our problem, as with every generation since 33 A.D. (or C.E.) is that we say one thing and do another.

“I want to walk as a child of the light...” says the wonderful hymn, but we cannot walk as children of the ‘light’ if we do not believe with all of our hearts that Jesus Christ rose from the dead for us. We are as uncommitted as Thomas was in verse 25 *“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.”* God would not let that statement pass. He proved to Thomas and the others that Resurrection was real and physical and more powerful than any human act could/would be. God did what God had to do to get commitment from this one who needed to see. If you are one who needs to see God will give you what you need. Today, the scars are this broken and battered world in which we live. You have to search for the brokenness if you wish to see Jesus. If you do that Jesus will show you the scars.

How does God deal with Thomas?

He first lets Thomas come to him rather than tracking him down. We all handle grief in different ways and what Thomas had witnessed was more than he could handle. Why wasn’t he with the others? We don’t know but it probably had to do with all he had experienced in the week ahead.

A second important point is that Thomas does not for one minute think he is no longer welcome in the body of his friends. He states his desire to experience what they have experienced. He waits **IN THE GROUP** not outside it. This community of faith holds all the keys.

A third important point is that Jesus does not dress Thomas down for his absence and Thomas does not get upset with the group for their lack of caring. It is for Thomas to return. Remember, only one of these made it through the entire crucifixion experience that we know of and yet they all gather on this third day. Each individual had the freedom to return or not return. Just like for us, when we are absent we miss the presence of Christ among us, those special times.

Remember the parables of the lost coin and the lost sheep? In the Post Resurrection experiences Christ is made manifest primarily (though not exclusively) within the community of faith. Christ may indeed be present everywhere and encounter the individual but it is within the community gathered that He is most clearly and powerfully present.

Resurrection is the mortar that holds the Church together. It alone brings reconciliation to the world and to each of us. Grace and trust follow in the path of reconciliation. If we feel as though we have to hide behind locked doors, Christ will take the initiative. If we are honest in blurting out our need, God will take it seriously and respond; God who is faithful and just will forgive us.

“Peace be with you.” These words unlock doors and breathe new life. These are words the Sunday assembly uses to share Christ’s peace with one another. These are words with which we ourselves hear and speak the good news: Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!!!