

Good morning Holy Spirit!

Grace and peace to you from the risen Christ.

I just want to jump right into it this morning this story from John invites us to talk about the trouble we have believing. I suspect that because, of our own doubts about Christ's death and resurrection, we have come to love Thomas in his humanity and his not wanting to believe in something that was impossible. However sometimes I think it's unfortunate that he has been eternally dubbed "doubting Thomas" because of his simple request for proof.

After all, is it really so terrible what he asked for? Thomas said that he had to see and touch Jesus, actually put his hands in Jesus' wounds in order for him to be able to believe. Thomas was only asking to employ the best of scientific research in his own day. Like a CSI investigation Thomas wanted to use the tools that were available to him to prove that a dead man was now walking.

Undoubtedly, we hope for the same. The quest to prove Jesus existed, never mind that he might have died and been resurrected, continues to this very day through scientific research and archaeological digs, carbon dating and more. And there are probably equally as many people seeking to prove the existence of Christ as there are people seeking to disprove it.

Thomas, by the way, was not the only person of faith to doubt. Throughout the biblical witness there are many examples of people who had a hard time grasping the existence of God. For example, it was only a few days before Thomas's experience that Peter himself ran away in fear and disbelief of all that was happening. We know that Moses kept asking God to find another for the job he was given, Abraham and Sarah actually laughed out loud when God promised a child to them.

Thomas did receive the proof that he was looking for. Others too, saw the resurrected Christ, but interestingly in different ways. As we hear about resurrection encounters we find a story of Jesus and meeting people on the roadway and they don't know who he is until he comes into their house and breaks bread with them. In another storey, Jesus appears on the beach and helps the disciples with the massive catch a fish. And even that morning of the Resurrection, Jesus appeared to Mary as a gardener. What this all tells us is that

God is in no way hiding from us, but is inviting us to come and see, come and believe in many different ways.

And I suppose if you are God you have the privilege to reveal yourself when and where you like! Whether it is through smoke and fire, a rainbow after a flood, as a gardener, or in the everyday nourishment of bread and wine. Perhaps then for us today the question is what are we to look for? Because, I'll assure you that just because we might not see God doesn't mean the God is not there.

We might be hoping to see God in some spectacular way, and yet at the same time, God is exposed in everyday ways all around us. I'm in our backyard this morning – waiting for spring! I've got a few seeds started, the snow is melting, even some of the trees are budding. We believe spring is on its way because we've learned to read the signs.

Like the wounds of Christ, God is exposed in the suffering of the world. Wherever hurt and despair exist or loneliness and isolation, or where people are in grief perhaps even dying - God is there in solidarity, in words of hope, in tears of sorrow.

Like the massive stone that was rolled away from the tomb revealing that love could not be held back, God is exposed where ever liberation and justice are practiced and oppressed peoples are restored to dignity.

Like the bread and wine shared the night before Jesus died as a means for us to forever remember what Jesus did, God is exposed as we nurture one another in love and care and provision.

These days, I believe we are experiencing a new manifestation of God in the world, as God is exposed in the creative and persistent ways we are finding to be community, families and even church together.

God is exposed in the work and discoveries of science and medicine that fight sickness - particularly in this pandemic - and in the blessing and diversity of the talents and gifts disbursed throughout our communities. We see this in on-going work, whether it be grocery store clerks, sanitation engineers, psychologists, teachers, pastors, gas station attendants, pharmacists, construction workers, and so many more.

God, who is the creator of us all, is today exposed in a new resurrection, as God again brings hope and light into what may be for many of us one of the darkest and most difficult times we will ever experience.

But the breath of God is all around us, breathing into us the life-giving Holy Spirit, breathing into us energy and compassion. God reveals to us yet again that we are not alone – a new day is upon us. Amen.