

**ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH
SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER HOMILY
MSGR. THOMAS RICE**

Gospel: *John 20:19-31*

On the evening of that first day of the week,
when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews,
Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.

The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you.

As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,
"Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them,
and whose sins you retain are retained."

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.

So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord."

But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the
nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them.
Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said,
"Peace be with you."

Then he said to Thomas, "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."

Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this
book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of
God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

April 19, 2020

My dear sisters and brothers,

Even though all of us are still in the "stay in place, stay safe" order to help reduce the
spread of the coronavirus, we as Christians continue our celebration of Easter.

Each year on the Sunday that immediately follows Easter we hear the story of the Apostle
Thomas, or as he is commonly called, the "Doubting Thomas".

It is important to reflect upon this story because whether we like or not there is a bit of Thomas in each of us. We all **oscillate** between belief and doubt. Thomas, of course is the classic example. **He both believed and did not believe and then, finally believed!**

What also is important for us to recognize today is how Jesus appeared to Thomas – not in radiant glory, but as wounded and scarred by his suffering and crucifixion. Why do you suppose this is so?

It is because Jesus knows that what really gets us down – and sometimes out – are the wounds of our daily living:

- ❖ Fear
- ❖ Depression
- ❖ Loneliness
- ❖ Doubt
- ❖ Sickness, and above all,
- ❖ Death

So, Jesus shows Thomas – and through him he shows us – that he understands, cares and loves us because He, too, is wounded and has the scars to prove it!

*“Thomas, take your finger and examine my hands. Put your hand into my side.
Do not persist in your unbelief, but believe!”*

On this day throughout the world, Jesus is being honored with special devotion, under a special title, as **DIVINE MERCY**. This is as it should be because too many people have a fearful, wrathful notion of God – a God to be kept at a distance.

But when we acknowledge the Risen Savior as **DIVINE MERCY**, we recognize what God wants us to see in Jesus – a Savior filled with so much love and mercy for us that he underwent his suffering, passion and death for us. Punishment is not what God is concerned about, but in **MERCY. HE TURNS NO ONE AWAY!**

To believe in a God so filled with love and forgiveness allows us to trust in what we cannot yet see. Thus, Our Lord’s words, “Blessed are they who have not yet seen, but believe!”

So like Thomas we find ourselves today standing before a wounded yet victorious Jesus. Accepting all our hurts and wounds Jesus says we too can be victorious. There is nothing to fear for He is the God of unending mercy desiring only that we love Him more and more. And that begins for all of us modern day “Doubting Thomases” when we too can say –

MY LORD AND MY GOD!

Fr. Tom

THE REGINA CAELI PRAYER

From Holy Saturday to Pentecost Catholics recite one of the Church's most joyful anthems, the Regina Caeli (Queen of Heaven), customarily said in place of the Angelus each day at 12 noon.

In the 6th century it was recited by Pope Gregory the Great while he was leading a procession asking for relief from a pestilence afflicting the population of Rome. The pestilence ended.

The Regina Caeli celebrates the Resurrection of Jesus and "congratulates" his Mother on her Son's victory over sin and death.

REGINA CAELI

℣- Verse

℟- Response

℣ Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia

℟ For He whom you did merit to bear, alleluia

℣ Has risen, as He said, alleluia

℟ Pray for us to God, alleluia

℣ Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia

℟ For the Lord is truly risen, alleluia

Let us pray:

O God, Who gave joy to the world through the Resurrection of Your Son,
Our Lord Jesus Christ,
Grant we pray, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother,
We may obtain the joys of everlasting life.
Through the same Christ Our Lord.
Amen