

2020 April 19

Second Sunday of Easter

Readings:

First: Acts. 2.42-47, "All who believed were together and had all things in common" (44)

Psalm 118, "Let those who fear the Lord say, His steadfast love endures." (4)

Second: 1 Peter 1.3-9, "He has given us a new birth into a living hope". (3b)

Gospel: John 20.19-31, "Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you'." (26c)

Thomas the Mystic

We have three references of Thomas speaking, all in St. John's gospel. "Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him'" (John 11:16). Thomas was intensely observing and listening to everything Jesus did and said. In the above instance he realized that the disciples could not dissuade Jesus from going to Jerusalem where his enemies were waiting for his blood. Thomas didn't want Jesus to go alone and so invites the others to go with him, and if need be, even die with him. Thomas' commitment to Jesus was already so total as to be ready to die with him.

He continued his listening to and contemplation of Jesus, and after the supper and his long conversation he realized that Jesus was going off for certain. He wouldn't let him go alone. He wanted to know the place and the way where Jesus was going. "Thomas said to him, 'Lord we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?'" Jesus said to him, ***I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me***" (John 14:4-6). This revelation of Jesus, himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life was prompted by Thomas who understood it better than anyone else because of his intense listening and observation of Jesus.

Along with the other disciples Thomas also was frightened, confused, and mystified at the arrest. He sensed the danger to Jesus and to themselves. Maybe, he didn't like to follow the crowd and witness to what was happening to Jesus as Peter and John did. Or he couldn't muster enough courage and strength to witness the murdering of Jesus. The death of Jesus made him inconsolable and so didn't want to be in company. He moved away and wandered, pondering on the words of Jesus, wanting to be united with him. Finally when he returned to the fold of the disciples he gets the news of Jesus living.

His obstinacy was for being united with Jesus. Hence the scene after the resurrection, "Then Jesus said to Thomas 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe,'" (John 20:27-28). In the spontaneous confession of Thomas, ***"My Lord and my God"***, the words of the mystic come out, who through silence and prayer finally discovered the truth about Jesus as his Lord and his God. Only a true mystic could have arrived at this depth of experience of Jesus as his God and Lord, a very personal and intense experience.

Fr. George

