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“Have you come to believe because you have seen me?” (John 20:29).

St. Thomas the Apostle

Eph 2:19-22; John 20:24-29

St. Thomas the Apostle is important for the faith community because his doubts led to a deeper explanation of the nature of faith itself. How many believers have wished they could ask the question Thomas posed when the other disciples told him they had seen the risen Jesus? We all want proof, and the boldness of Thomas' demand goes to the heart of the question: Was the risen Christ really the same person as the dead, crucified Jesus?

John's Gospel is furthest in time from the events of the crucifixion and the Easter appearances. John is also the most theological of the Gospels, so it is natural that our questions seek a definitive answer on this most central of truths about our faith. But a careful reading of all four Gospels shows that the authors and the faith communities they wrote for preserved a zone of mystery around the crucified and risen Jesus. The disciples encountered a transformed, divine Being, not a resuscitated corpse. They recognized their friend and teacher, Jesus of Nazareth, but he was now their Lord in glory.

Easter faith requires a graced movement from the Jesus of history to the Christ in glory, the Son of God. The story of Thomas witnesses to this transition. He moved from seeking physical proof to a theophany that brought him to his knees in

worship. He wanted to “see” with his human eyes, but instead his mind and heart were opened to a mystery only believers can apprehend. All the appearance stories in the Gospels are more than fact checking; they are life-changing encounters with a mystery that transcends time and space.

Thomas intrigues us for another reason. He is called *Didymus*, the “Twin.” That this detail was preserved in the tradition may mean he was an actual twin, or perhaps, that Thomas the doubter and Thomas the believer were aspects of the same person in transition to faith. Two famous novels explore this theme, *The Other*, by Thomas Tryon, and *The Secret Sharer*, by Joseph Conrad.

Perhaps we are all “twins,” before-and-after Christians who have had to make the journey from doubt to faith. Crossing the threshold from knowledge to belief is more than just an intellectual feat. Another Thomas, the great St. Thomas Aquinas, described the pursuit of God as “faith seeking understanding” instead of understanding seeking faith. The gift of faith comes first, for no amount of reasoning can reveal the face of the living Christ, the crucified and risen Jesus as our personal encounter with God.

We commemorate Thomas the Apostle because he helps us understand that our faith is a living relationship with Jesus and not a problem to be solved. The Christian life is not a program to be mastered, but an endless mystery that will guide us through this life into an eternity of discovery and joy.

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