

**Divine Mercy Sunday**  
**April 12, 2015**

Today's Gospel is so very familiar to us, yet maybe we can look at it in a new way. In addition to following Thomas' journey from doubt and disbelief to faith in Jesus – "My Lord and my God!" – we might also consider what Fr. William Bausch has called the Thomas Syndrome: "Thomas, called Didimus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came" (*Once Upon a Gospel*, Twenty-Third Pub., New London, Conn.: 2008).

Where was he? How could he have been absent? But he was, and as a result, he didn't see Jesus or hear him speak or receive his peace. He wasn't there when Jesus breathed forth his Spirit on his own. So, he didn't understand; his faith was shaken. He had nothing to hold onto but his doubt.

So today we might consider the fact that we too, at times, are Absent Thomases. We're absent from sufficient knowledge about our faith".

Because we're not as steeped in our tradition as we could be, we don't know how to interpret popular fictions like *The DaVinci Code* or how to evaluate the efforts of the Jesus Seminar.

While we may be up-to-date on current events, and while we try to remain current in our job skills, we may not always be so conscientious in enriching our faith and appreciating the rich traditions of our church.

How can we follow the lead of those earliest believers in the great work of evangelization if our religious education and formation ended in grade school or high

school? Our religious formation must be continuous. It's a cradle-to-the-grave process. And it will be a priority for me to ensure that these opportunities are available to everyone.

Now if the disciples had been left to their own devices, they may have remained forever silent and fearful behind closed doors. But Jesus came to them, wished them peace and breathed the new life of the Spirit into them.

This same Jesus comes to us, breathing the power of the Spirit into us, enabling us to overcome our doubts and fears so as to witness to the Gospel. We, for our part, are to receive that Spirit and cultivate its presence in our lives. Like Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus, we are to be wise and sit at the feet of Jesus, listening to him and taking his words to heart.

We are so blessed to have access the rich resources offered in the scriptures, as well as other wonderful publications and prayer and study groups that are available in our parish with more coming in the future.

But Thomas has another valuable lesson to teach to all who struggle to believe. A week later, when he was with the disciples, Jesus invited him to touch his wounds and to believe. Thomas recognized the risen Jesus and made a profound declaration of faith – “My Lord and my God.” He had experienced the resurrection.

We who also know and believe in the resurrected Jesus are called to offer that same experience to others.

As Ralph Kuehner and Joseph Juknialis have pointed out (*Living the Word*, Paluch, Franklin Park, Ill.: 2005), resurrection happens whenever love transforms life;

when someone offers forgiveness despite a burning desire for vengeance; when a nation begins to value and protect the rights of all, not just a few; when the poor, hungry, homeless and disenfranchised are attended as brothers and sisters; when immigrants and refugees are not left to drown or incarcerated but are welcomed as the children of God.

Resurrection happens when enemies sit down together to talk instead of planning the other's demise. Resurrection is happening all around us; so let's not ever be afraid to venture out of our locked doors and celebrate that Jesus, our Lord and our God, truly lives!