

April 2, 2016

Doubting Thomas

Readings: Acts 5:27-32
John 20:19-31



The story of Thomas has always been one of my favorites. Of course, it's not just a story about Thomas. It's also a story about frightened disciples. So scared, in fact, that, they hid behind locked doors. And who can blame them? They had just witnessed the one they confessed to be the Messiah betrayed by one of his own, tried and convicted by both religious and civil authorities, and then brutally executed. Little wonder they were afraid, assuming that the next step would be to round up Jesus' followers. But when Jesus comes on the scene, their fear falls away and is replaced by joy.

This, I think, is the way we assume faith should work. Yes, perhaps you've got doubts and questions and fears, but then God arrives and those all fall away, replaced by joy and wonder and, of course, unshakeable faith.

But that's not the way it works with Thomas. He doubts. He questions. He disbelieves. He's not satisfied with second-hand reports and wants to see for himself. And again I would say, who can blame him? He was, after all, one of those who saw his Lord and friend mistreated, beaten, and then crucified and has probably spent the last few days pulling the broken pieces of his life back together and trying to figure out what to do next. In fact, he might have already started getting on with his life – why else, I wonder, is he out and about when the rest of the disciples are hiding behind locked doors.

So here's what I'm wondering a day or two after a joyous Easter service: do we make room for the Thomases in our world? Because I suspect that their number is legion, even among those who worshipped with us on Sunday and certainly among those with little or no familiarity with our congregation or faith.

Thomas does come to believe. He sees Jesus for himself. And after that experience he not only assents or consents to the witness of his comrades but makes the most profound confession of faith about Jesus contained in the New Testament, calling Jesus "my Lord and my God," bookending the confession in John 1 where the eternal word that becomes flesh is not only with God but is God.

But all of that comes after he has a chance to voice his doubt. And sometimes faith is like that – it needs the freedom of questions and doubt to really spring forth and take hold. Otherwise, faith might simply be confused with a repetition of creedal formulas, or giving your verbal consent to the faith statements of others. But true, vigorous, vibrant faith comes, I think, from the freedom to question, wonder, and doubt.

Not for everyone, of course. For some, faith comes more easily. Maybe many of the other disciples were like that (although let's not forget they got to see what Thomas asked for!). But for others it's harder.

To tell you the truth, I have no idea what the other disciples thought of Thomas' initial skepticism. Maybe they were scandalized. Or maybe they sympathized. Further, I suspect that John's whole point in including this story in his Gospel is to affirm the faith of his community, a group of people who "had not seen yet believed." But on this Sunday, I think it's important to make room for a little doubt.

Indeed, I think that if we don't have any doubts we're probably not taking the story seriously enough. I mean, really – think about what we confess when we come together on Sundays: that the Creator of the vast cosmos not only knows we exist but cares deeply and passionately about our ups and downs, our hopes and dreams, and all the rest. This confession is, quite literally, in-credible (that is, not believable). And yet we come together and in hearing the Word and partaking of the Sacraments and by being joined to those around us through prayer and song, we come to believe.

For some it's easy. For others, more difficult. For some, hearing the testimony of Scripture is enough. For others, they need something more personal and direct. Questions and wonder and doubt and even skepticism are signs of interest and curiosity and these, quite often, are the soil in which vibrant faith is born.

- David Lose

This Week at Inca



Refugee Family - Update

In February Inca was matched with a Syrian refugee family living in Turkey. In a rare turn of events our family, a mother with two small children, declined coming to Canada because she didn't want to be separated from the rest of her extended family. In late March we were fortunate to be matched with another refugee family. This family is also from Syria but currently living in Lebanon. They are a husband and wife with a 3-year old son, a daughter who turns 2 in July and a baby on the way in mid-August. The wife understands a little bit of English. Both parents have high school level education. The husband is an electrician by trade. The refugee committee is busy preparing for their arrival. Their exact travel date is unknown at this time. Our best guess is that they will arrive in Oakville by the end of June.

Thank you everyone for all the generous donations of toys, household items and furniture for the refugee family. We have almost everything that a family will need. Here is a list of items we are still looking for:

- infant car seat, diaper bag, bouncy seat, play mat, activity centre, bassinet, infant clothing (onesies, sleepers, receiving blankets), washcloths
- rolling pin, grater box, small garbage bags
- laundry basket, drying rack, iron and ironing board, plunger
- broom and dust pan, step stool, bucket and mop
- tools, sewing kit
- tablet, computer
- garbage cans for bathroom and bedrooms
- fire extinguisher, flashlight and batteries

If you have any of these items, please give them to Leslie Hickey



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

SHORT-TERM ACCOMMODATION REQUIRED IMMEDIATELY

We're looking for housing in Oakville or Burlington for a family of five. The client is on the special priority list for subsidized housing through the Region, and we hope an offer will be made to her soon. In the interim, she needs to find transitional housing.

Please let Michael know if you have information about temporary housing options. Financial donations towards the accommodations gladly accepted as well.



Parish Business

Michael will be away starting Monday April 11th and will return to the office on Tuesday, April 19th.

Meetings:

Eco Justice – Wednesday, April 6th at 1pm

Parish Council – Sunday, April 25 after the 10:00 Service



Choir Practice –

The choir rehearses every Wednesday at 7:30. Share your voice, all welcome.

In April, rehearsals will take place on April 6 and April 20, and are cancelled April 13 and 27. In May the choir will meet on May 11 and 25, and May 4 and 18 are cancelled.



Wing and a Prayer – Thursday, April 28, 2016

We meet at 6:30pm at Monaghan's. Cost: \$25 per person including food and drink. RSVP Rob Moniuk (Robert@Moniuk.ca).

Everyone is welcome!



Contemplative Fire – Sunday, April 17, 8:00pm.

Are you looking for time to reflect, meditate and recharge your spiritual life? Each meeting begins with a communal sharing of food followed by quiet and intentional reflection in the gathering area. The response to this has been very encouraging. We continue to see new faces at each meeting and look forward to growing this community. For more information, please speak to Michael. All are welcome.



Bible Study – Exploring the Resurrection – begins May 5

Thursday evenings from 7:30-9:00pm,
May 5, 12, 19, 26 and June 2, meeting in the Education Room.

Lead by Mervyn Russell

Continuing to Break the Silence



Continuing to Break the Silence Workshop Series

Tuesdays 6-9:30pm at Incarnation

A series of three workshops to explore vital personal and relational areas of mental health. Contact Karen Pitt for more information karpitt@gmail.com 905-467-4780

April 5 – About Abuse

April 12 - Suicide and Self-harm

April 19 - Caring for the Relationally Damaged



Youth Group Events-

For info contact Phil Carver at incayouthprogram@gmail.com



Youth Synod

Session 1: April 15-17,

Session 2: May 27-28

Contact Su McLeod for more details su.mcleod@niagaraanglican.ca

Niagara Youth Conference – August 28 to September 2, 2016

A caring, spiritual, participatory learning community that encourages inclusivity and personal growth - mitigated, of course, by fun and frivolity! This is a residential conference for youth ages 13-21. Early bird registration is now open. Details can be [found here](#)

Diocese News

JUSTnews

The Anglican Diocese of Niagara
...creating a just and loving world for all

Excerpts from the March Issue of Just News

Towards Marriage Equality

Our upcoming General Synod will consider a revision to the national Marriage Canon that would not change the meaning of marriage but broaden it to include same-sex relationships. Following a special meeting in Niagara Falls to consider the matter, the [House of Bishops issued this statement](#), which was posted alongside an [article](#) which offers some helpful context.

Bishop Michael quickly responded with a pastoral letter to express his sadness and regret that the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon lack support from the House of Bishops. In his words the changes "seek to uphold this sacred dignity in the sacrament of marriage for those who identify as LGBTQ2." You can [read the full letter here](#).

The Council of General Synod has also weighed in on the matter with a [statement to the Church](#) and a [response directed to the House of Bishops](#).

As we strive for justice as a church and work towards marriage equality please: ready, study and engage with the report on the Marriage Canon, [This Holy Estate](#). And pray for those who are delegates to General Synod as they discern God's leading.

Refugee Rights Day

April 4, 1985 was a milestone for refugee rights in Canada. On that day, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects the right of refugee claimants in Canada to life, liberty and security of the person.

[Learn more here.](#)

Community News



Piano Recital – Sunday April 24 at 5pm, at Incarnation

Rare opportunity to see one of Oakville's up and coming solo pianists, Anna Betka as she prepares for international competitions.

Admission is \$20 for adults and \$15 for student/seniors. Tickets available at the door



Earth Week Clean up Saturday, April 23, 9-11am

Pitch-in at one of 44 nature sites in Oakville and help make a difference for our health, biodiversity and the natural environment of our community. Details at oakvillepeacecentre.org



Interfaith Peace Walk Sunday May 15th from 12:30-2:30

Organized by the Interfaith Council of Halton in partnership with various community groups, houses of worship, schools and the Town of Oakville. Meet in Centennial Square to hear some words of inspiration and music before the walk begins.



Mendelssohn's *Elijah*

Saturday, May 7 at 8pm – St. Matthew Catholic Church, Oakville
 Sunday May 8 at 3pm, – Metropolitan United Church, Toronto

Presented by Masterworks of Oakville Chorus and Orchestra, with the Univox Choir of Toronto. Featuring our very own Charlene Pauls!

Tickets are \$30 for adults, \$25 for seniors and \$15 for students – children 10 and under are free. www.masterworksofoakville.ca

This & That



Buy Good Coffee – Available in the office

Delicious, organic, Arabica coffee grown by women in Peru who are paid above fair trade prices. \$15 for a 1lb bag, \$10 for a 10oz bag.

Remember, 30% of the proceeds will be donated to the missions of Incarnation.



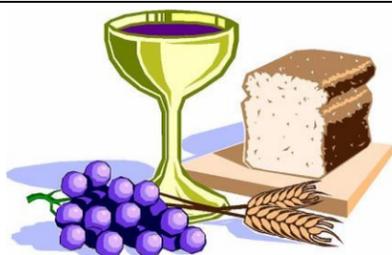
Looking to volunteer?

We have lots of way you can get involved. Positions include: altar prep, greeters, readers, hosts and coffee preparation. **Youth** can gain some volunteer high school hours. Training will be provided. Contact Claudine Boulert, at boulert@rogers.com for more information, or call 905-825-2851.



Changes to Order of Service or Bulletin News - Any changes need to be sent to the office by Tuesday, noon. office@incarnationchurch.ca

Nametags let people know who you are and make it helpful for people to put names to faces, especially for newcomers



Receiving Communion

All people at Incarnation are invited to receive the bread and wine at communion. The bread is received from the priest who stands between the servers who offer wine from the common cup; choose whatever side is free. You may choose to receive from an individual wine cups available to the left of the altar. Take one, consume the wine and replace the empty cup in the same spot. We hope this provides an inclusive approach to communion where all are welcome.

VOLUNTEER!	April 2	April 10
Bread Making	L. Hickey	B. Gowing
Altar Prep	W. MacDougall	B. Hanna-Morrison
Coffee	MacDougall	P. Russell
Coffee	MacLaughlan	Jenkins
Host	J. Smith	K. Wilson
Reader 1	S. Curran	A. Tuner-Sommer
Gospel	B. Gowing	A. MacNaughton
Prayers	D. Weiler	K. Pitt
Server 1	W. Burk	J. Stevens
Server 2	T. Burk	P. Moffat
Wine Cups	C. Boulert	E. Lorimer
Counting	J. Smith	D. Bold