



I Doubt It

Skepticism is a characteristic of a critical mind. Some claims are just too fantastic to trust: no salve can relieve you of all pain; no investment is certain to double your money; no politician can keep all promises; no one comes back from the dead. Who of us can fault Thomas for his initial skepticism?

Thomas has been known through history as “the doubter.” However, he might be considered the patron saint of all of us. Because of his absence when Jesus stood in the midst of the community, Thomas was expected to believe on the word of others. Like Thomas, we are torn between believing because of an experience of Jesus, and believing on the word of others. We all would prefer a direct, profound experience. However, that’s not what we’re offered.

But within the community we can indirectly experience Jesus—his goodness, his unselfish service to others, his desire to bring people together in peace and harmony. The first reading provides a glimpse of such a believing community devoted to “the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers” (Acts 2:42). Like our patron Thomas, we might be skeptical at first, but it is within a family or community of kindness and generosity that we can have our own experience of the risen Jesus.

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR Reflection

- ★ *Where in your family do you experience devotion to others, forgiveness, and courage? Where do you bring these attitudes?*
- ★ *How might you strengthen the bonds of your community so that others can recognize the presence of the risen Jesus?*



*Jesus said to [Thomas],
“Have you come to believe
because you have seen me?
Blessed are those who have
not seen and have believed.”*

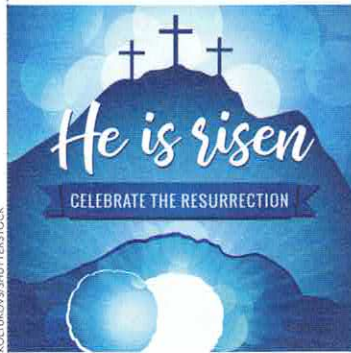
JOHN 20:29

NEWAFRICA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Dear Padre,

A friend of mine always makes such a big deal of the time after Easter. What is this Easter season all about?

These days and weeks after Easter are indeed significant. We Christians are an Easter people. The resurrection is the cornerstone of our faith. Without the belief that Christ conquered death and our hope that we will share in that same victory over the grave, our faith is pointless. We celebrate with great fanfare that we are a redeemed people in Jesus Christ.



KOLUDOVSKY/SHUTTERSTOCK

Every year our forty-day Lenten preparation of fasting and penance leads us to the feasting and joy of the fifty days of Easter. This unbelievable news that the risen Christ is in our midst draws us into a festival that cannot be contained in a single day. "The fifty days from Sunday of the Resurrection to Pentecost Sunday are celebrated in joy and exultation as one feast day, indeed as one 'great Sunday'" (*The Roman Missal*, "Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and Calendar," 22).

Part of the challenge of Easter is learning again how to celebrate a fifty-day feast. Most Catholics do not think of Easter as an extended feast. We tend to see Easter, the ascension, and Pentecost as three separate, independent feast days, each with its own themes. The truth of the matter is that they are all part and parcel of the other, intertwined and borne of the same glorious fact of Christ's resurrection. This is a perfect time to remind ourselves of that joyous and significant connection.

—Fr. Joseph Ring
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WORD FROM *Pope Francis*



To us also, on this Sunday, which St. John Paul II wished to dedicate to divine mercy, the Lord shows us, through the Gospel, his wounds. They are wounds of mercy... Jesus invites us to behold these wounds, to touch them as Thomas did, to heal our lack of belief. Above all, he invites us to enter into the mystery of these wounds, which is the mystery of his merciful love.

—HOMILY, APRIL 12, 2015

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Calendar

Monday

APRIL 20

Easter Weekday

Acts 4:23–31

Jn 3:1–8

Tuesday

APRIL 21

Easter Weekday

Acts 4:32–37

Jn 3:7b–15

Wednesday

APRIL 22

Easter Weekday

Acts 5:17–26

Jn 3:16–21

Thursday

APRIL 23

Easter Weekday

Acts 5:27–33

Jn 3:31–36

Friday

APRIL 24

Easter Weekday

Acts 5:34–42

Jn 6:1–15

Saturday

APRIL 25

St. Mark,

Evangelist

1 Pt 5:5b–14

Mk 16:15–20

Sunday

APRIL 26

Third Sunday

of Easter

Acts 2:14, 22–33

1 Pt 1:17–21

Lk 24:13–35

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