



*From the Pastor*  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday*  
*of Easter - A*  
*April 16, 2023*

### WHERE WAS SAINT THOMAS?

Every year, on the *2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter* [once called '*Low Sunday*' due to last

*Sunday's* highly festive, 'pull-out-all-the-stops' *Easter* celebration, we always hear the so-called *Gospel of 'Doubting Thomas.'* Where in the world was this *Apostle* who refused to believe in *Christ's Resurrection* until he probed the nail marks in Jesus' hands with his fingers and put his hand into the Risen Lord's sword-torn-opened chest wound? [Talk about being brazen!] *Scripture* does not tell us *where 'The Doubter'* was the week after that first *Easter* ... but it certainly stresses where he was NOT! *Thomas* was NOT with the other ten *Apostles* [*Judas had already committed suicide*] in that *Upper Room* where they had celebrated the *Last Supper*!

While what I write now is pure conjecture, I do believe it makes logical sense. Did the *Crucifixion* so overwhelm *Saint Thomas* with grief and disappointment, fear and frustration, anger and hopelessness, that he turned into himself and shunned everyone else? Did he foolishly try to process and deal with life's harsh realities on his own, without any help? He had been so firmly committed to *Christ* when *Jesus* took them to *Lazarus'* tomb, which we heard a few weeks ago: "*So Thomas, called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, 'Let us also go to die with him.'*" [John 11:16] Had his faith and trust faltered? Or was he simply trying to move on without being part of the fledgling *Infant Church*?

There are many who have also sadly given up on *God* and His *Church* - to their own loss - and ours! Their reasons for leaving are 'legion': the sex abuse scandals; financial misdeeds; personality conflicts; or something "*Sister* or *Father* [supposedly] said or did" ... some 30, 50, 70 or more years ago! Some simply subscribe to the same notion that *Saint Thomas* seemingly succumbed to: "I can do it alone; I don't need any help; I can figure it out on my own ..."

Perhaps the primary problem is that: just like the '*Doubter*,' we do not believe what *Saint Thomas* eventually - and so proudly - professed: that *Christ* IS, indeed, risen from the dead - and is

TRULY PRESENT in many ways. *God* speaks to each generation's questions and issues through *His holy word* and the *Church's teaching* or her 2,000-year reflection on, and application of, *Sacred Scripture*. The *Lord* offers support and encouragement through the *Christian Community* who gathers in His *Name*. *God* makes us His own children in *Baptism*; gifts us with the *Holy Spirit* in *Confirmation*; shepherds us through those in *Holy Orders*; mercifully forgives us in the *Sacrament of Penance*; strengthens and consoles us in the *Anointing of the Sick*; and serves as the binding ointment between husbands and wives and the rest of the family in the *Sacrament of Matrimony*. Who would NOT want to be a part of, and able to cash in on, all of these spiritual blessings?

### SAINT THOMAS: THE FIRST CHRISTIAN TO MISS A SUNDAY EVENT, BUT NOT THE LAST!

It seems that, from the start, some *Christians* were AWOL! While the following quote may sound like something I wrote in a bulletin article or biannual letter to all registered parishioners, it is far from new! "*We must consider how to rouse one another to love and good works. We should not stay away from our assembly,\* as is the custom of some, but encourage one another, and this all the more as you see the day drawing near.*" [Hebrews 10:24-25] A footnote \* in the revised *New American Bible*, the English translation used by the *Church* in the *USA*, explains what "*our assembly*" means.

The words, "*our assembly*," are used elsewhere in the New Testament [Romans 2:16; 1 Corinthians 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:2] for the *Christian Community* which met *weekly*, on *Sunday*, as a 'dress rehearsal' for the *ultimate Judgment Day of the Lord*. The *Jewish* custom to meet on *Saturday*, based on the *Commandment* to "*keep holy the Sabbath Day*," was 'altered' by the *Apostles* who, authorized by *Christ* to declare loose or bound, changed it to *Sunday*. This answers the oft-asked question, "*Where in the Bible is the obligation to attend weekly Mass?*" The *National Eucharistic Revival* [see my articles about it on our parish website] is intended to help us 'recapture' the weekly *Sunday Obligation*. *Happy Easter!*

*In His holy Name,*

*Rev. Thomas J. Serafin, KCHS*