

April 8, 2018
“A Touch of Doubt”

First Reading ~ *John 20:19-31*

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the room where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Temple authorities, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Having said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw Jesus, who said to them again, "Peace be with you. As God has sent me, so I send you." After saying this, Jesus breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone's sins, they are retained."

It happened that Thomas (nicknamed Didymus, or "Twin"), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples kept telling him, "We have seen the Christ." Thomas' answer was, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later the disciples were again in the room, and Thomas was with them. Despite the locked doors, Jesus came and stood among them, saying, "Peace be with you." Then to Thomas, Jesus said, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas said in response, "My Savior and my God!" Jesus then said, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Holy One of God, and that through believing you may have newness of life.

Second Reading ~ *from A. Powell Davies*

Let me tell you why I come to church. I come to church—and would whether I was a preacher or not—because I fall below my own expectations and need to be constantly reminded and brought back to them. I am afraid of becoming selfish and indulgent, and my church—my church of the free spirit—brings me back to what I want to be. I could easily despair; doubt and dismay could overwhelm me. My church renews my courage and my hope. It is not enough that I should think about the world and its problems at the level of a newspaper report or magazine discussion. It could too soon become too low a level. I must have my conscience sharpened—sharpened until it goads me to the most thorough and responsible thinking of which I am capable. I must feel again the love I owe to others. I must not only hear about it but feel it, touch it, and be touched by it. In church, I do. I am brought toward my best, in every way toward my best.