

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER, APRIL 12, 2015

DOUBT HAS GOTTEN A BAD RAP HASN'T IT, ESP. IN CHURCH CIRCLES....

WE TEND TO BE EMBARRASSED ABOUT OUR DOUBTS, EVEN ASHAMED OF THEM.....

EVEN THOUGH EVERYONE HAS AT LEAST OCCASIONAL DOUBTS, OR QUESTIONS, OR UNCERTAINTIES....

I KNOW THAT I DO...

SOMETIMES, WHAT WE DO UP HERE SEEMS KIND OF FOOLISH....

WE ALL SHARE A KINSHIP WITH THOMAS, THE DOUBTING APOSTLE, DON'T WE?

PERHAPS, THE ONLY REAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIM AND US IS THAT HE ADMITTED HIS DOUBTS....

OF COURSE, THERE IS PATHOLOGICAL DOUBT....CAUSED BY PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS...

BUT MOST OF OUR DOUBTS, HOWEVER, ARE TO BE EXPECTED....

NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF.....

IN FACT, IN SOME AREAS OF OUR LIFE.....

DOUBTING IS QUITE COMMENDABLE....

GALILEO CALLED DOUBT THE "FATHER OF DISCOVERY"....

CERTAINLY IN SCIENCE AND POLITICS, VIRTUALLY EVERY PROGRESSIVE STEP IN HISTORY STARTED WITH SOMEONE'S SCEPTICISM....DOUBTS

E.G. PEOPLE DOUBTED THE DIVINE RIGHT OF KINGS....

RESULTING EVENTUALLY IN DEMOCRACY

*E.G. PEOPLE DOUBTED DISEASES WERE A CURSE FROM GOD RESULTING
IN SCIENTIFIC MEDICINE...*

QUESTIONING IS VERY IMPORTANT IN SCIENCE

*EVEN IN MATTERS OF RELIGION WE COULD SAY THAT JESUS WAS A
DOUBTER....*

HE HAD DOUBTS ABOUT THE ANCIENT LAW OF RETRIBUTION...

"AN EYE FOR AN EYE AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH "

CHOOSING RATHER TO REPAY EVIL WITH GOOD...

*HE CERTAINLY DOUBTED THE CONCEPT OF A MILITARY/POLITICAL
MESSIAH, CHOOSING INSTEAD TO DIE ON A CROSS.....*

OUR DOUBTS ARE NOT ALWAYS THAT CREATIVE THOUGH ARE THEY.....

*I WOULD SUBMIT THAT WHAT MAKES DOUBTING CREATIVE AND
GROWTHFUL IS FIRST, HONESTY.....*

*LIKE THOMAS, WE NEED TO BE HONEST ABOUT OUR DOUBTS - HONEST
WITH OURSELVES AND HONEST WITH OTHERS....*

*AND SECONDLY, ALSO LIKE THOMAS, WE NEED TO REMAIN CONNECTED
WITH A COMMUNITY.....*

A COMMUNITY THAT ACCEPTS US AND OUR DOUBTS

A COMMUNITY CAN LIVE WITH US AND OUR DOUBTS....

*LIKE THAT FIRST CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY CONTINUED TO LIVE
WITH THOMAS...*

*HOPEFULLY, THIS QAC COMMUNITY IS SUCH A COMMUNITY WHERE WE
WE CAN INCLUDE AND SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER INCLUDING OUR*

DOUBTS....

AND THAT'S OK....IT'S OK

WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS REMAINING CONNECTED TO THE COMMUNITY.....

AND THE COMMUNITY CONNECTED TO THE INDIVIDUAL.....

IT'S A TWO WAY STREET AND ENTAILS A LOT OF WORK ON BOTH SIDES....

VERY IMPORTANT WORK - VERY IMPORTANT EFFORTS

IF WE REMAIN CONNECTED, REALLY CONNECTED, TO EACH OTHER

THE DOUBTING WILL LEAD TO SOME CREATIVE RESOLUTION -

I CAN ASSURE YOU OF THAT....A CREATIVE RESOLUTION...

THAT RESOLUTION WILL ALSO INCLUDE GREATER LOVE....

GREATER UNDERSTANDING, GREATER COMPASSION

GREATER COMPASSION AND GREATER CONNECTION.....ON BOTH SIDES

WHICH, AGAIN, IS WHAT HAPPENED IN THOMAS' CASE....

GREATER LOVE, GREATER CONNECTION....

THAT'S WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT....IN ANY CASE.....

GREATER COMPASSION

WHICH LEADS ME TO THE THIRD POINT...

BEYOND HONESTY, BEYOND REMAINING CONNECTED....

LIKE THOMAS, WE MUST BE WILLING TO PUT OUR HANDS IN HIS

WOUNDS, IN HIS HANDS AND IN HIS FEET....

THEN OUR DOUBTING BECOMES CREATIVE....

I THINK THAT MEANS WE MUST BE WILLING TO GET MESSY, TO SUFFER

OURSELVES.....AND ENTER THE SUFFERING OF OTHERS.

EXACTLY, WHAT FRANCIS, OUR PRESENT LEADER, IS SAYING TO US.....

BE WILLING TO GET MESSY, REACH OUT TO THE WOUNDED, THE

VULNERABLE, THE SUFFERING....

THERE WE MEET THE RISEN CHRIST, THERE WE WILL LEAVE OUR

DOUBTS BEHIND...

ASK THE WOMEN IN OUR COMMUNITY WHO ARE INVOLVED IN PRISON

MINISTRY WHAT THAT IS LIKE FOR THEM....

HOW THEY MIGHT BE SEEING THE RISEN CHRIST IN THE LIVES OF

THOSE WOMEN IN PRISON THEY MEET WITH.....

THE TOUCHING OF ONE ANOTHER'S WOUNDS IN SUCH AN INTIMATE WAY

ASK THOSE INVOLVED IN OUR CIRCLES OF CONSOLING GROUPS WITHIN

THE COMMUNITY...

WHAT IT IS LIKE FOR THEM AND THEIR FAITH AS THEY SHARE WITH ONE

ANOTHER THE WOUNDS OF LOSING A SPOUSE, THE VULNERABILITY, THE

TOUCHING OF ONE ANOTHER'S WOUNDS IN SUCH AN INTIMATE

MANNER...

IT IS MY EXPERIENCE THAT IF I AM WILLING TO STAY CONNECTED TO A

COMMUNITY, TO AT LEAST ONE OTHER PERSON.....

I WILL BE ABLE TO STAY OUT OF MY HEAD.....

I WILL LEAVE MY DOUBTS BEHIND AND ENTER MY HEART....

ENTER MY SOUL.....IF YOU WILL.....

ESPECIALLY, IF I AM WILLING TO BE VULNERABLE MYSELF AND

WILLING TO REACH OUT AND TOUCH THE WOUNDS OF ANOTHER I AM

EVENTUALLY ABLE TO GET A GLIMPSE OF THE RISEN CHRIST ...

LET US PRAY FOR THE GRACE TO REMAIN CONNECTED TO A BELIEVING

COMMUNITY AND WILLING TO BE VULNERABLE OURSELVES -

IN TOUCH WITH OUR OWN WOUNDS.....

AND WILLING TO REACH OUT TO OTHERS WHO ARE WOUNDED BOTH

WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AND OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY....

LET US GIVE THANKS FOR THIS COMMUNITY.....

AND ALL THE WAYS WE GET A GLIMPSE OF THE RISEN CHRIST, WITH HIS

WOUNDS....

ENABLING US TO HEAR HIS MESSAGE TO US, "PEACE BE WITH YOU"

AND ENABLING US TO SAY, "MY LORD AND MY GOD"....

LET US CONCLUDE IN THAT MANNER.....

I WILL SAY TO YOU, "PEACE BE WITH YOU"

AND WE WILL EXPRESS TOGETHER ARE FAITH IN THE RISEN CHRIST

AMONG US.....

AS WE FACE THE TABERNACLE.....

"MY LORD AND MY GOD"