

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Jul 3rd 2013

Feast of St. Thomas, apostle

Doubting Thomas has always been someone I relate to very well. During times when I feel a crisis of faith I am comforted that I am not alone as Thomas questioned before me. Once Thomas saw what he needed to see to feel comfortable he was a true believer. What courage Thomas displayed by not ignoring his doubt and simply going along with the group. It is hard to be an outlier, yet Thomas showed his fidelity to himself and to Jesus.

Praying about Thomas helps me examine my own skepticism. And I wonder about when the skepticism turns to cynicism. My astrological sign is Scorpio and the phrase “cynical Scorpio” has resonated with me. Yet cynicism for me has such a sense of hopelessness. I worry in our world today that we are expected to not trust anything, question everything and therefore not believe. Unhealthy cynicism is very suspicious of people’s motives and leads us to unforgiving judgment. There is no room for self-reflection in cynicism. Inspired by Thomas and true to my optimistic nature, the phrase “skeptical Scorpio” is better suited to understanding my world.

A healthy skepticism urges us to wonder and to question. This skepticism helps us explore who we really are and what we truly believe. By asking questions we can be open to other truths as well. My work in conflict engagement has shown me that absolute certainty is very limiting and can leave people stuck in pain and misery. We can abandon certainty to open ourselves up to possibilities. This is faith.

Jesus is so very kind to Thomas. Jesus welcomes the doubt and supports Thomas in learning what he needs to learn to believe. What a model for great leadership. A good leader has nothing to hide and is comfortable with the questions and the challenges. Jesus models patience and understanding.

Jesus reminds us “blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.” I pray for insight to question my actions and intentions. I pray for courage to speak up when I have questions about the actions of my colleagues, friends and family. I pray this skeptical Scorpio can continue to strive to serve the kingdom of God.

Mary Lee Brock