

## Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Jul 3rd 2014

I would like to say a few good words on behalf of my old friend Didymus, the twin. He was one of us, we are his twin with our own needs for self-assuring experiences which we could then call our faith experience.

One good word would be about his living out his encounter with Jesus who apparently came back a second time just for him. He did go out to all the world to tell the good news. Thomas did submit to the humiliation of having to see and touch after not trusting the experiences of his fellow escape-artists from Good Friday's trauma. Thomas also made an explicit declaration of belief in the presence of the others. I wonder what they said of him and to him during the days after the first appearance and before the one of which we hear today. They had had the same sensible encounter as Thomas is asking for and which he received, so why refer to him as "doubting Thomas!"

I do wonder why the author of this Gospel has this little event wedged in the Resurrectional narrative. Perhaps the author wanted everyone to know that doubting is part of believing. We need signs, touches, words, that is who we are of course and trusting others' words is not as comfortable as, pardon the word-play, having a "first hand" experience. Maybe the author wanted to emphasize the communal rather than the individual revelational experiences. Ten good men and two are more trustworthy than what one person might advance as authentic. Who knows for sure, but the author had something in mind—what do you think?

I enjoy imagining where Thomas was on that day of the big coming-in party. So I have asked him and here is the Q-and-A transcript.

Q. "So where were you that Faithful day and what were you doing?"

A. "Those other guys were so scared they huddled up hoping everybody in town would forget the whole thing. I remembered what he, Jesus, had told us the night of our last dinner together. I knew it was kind of a graduation talk, but I listened anyway. He said he would not abandon us and things like that so what's to fear? I was out doing some damage control actually, especially among the women and families he loved so much. They had welcomed him and us all around the area. I related to them what he had told us that night. The more I spoke the more I could remember, you know how that goes."

Q. "People refer to you as the Doubter. How do you feel about that?"

A. “Come on now, doubting is what we do best as humans. Doubting proves I am human and those others are doubters too and I love the brotherhood of believers who allow and accept each other’s personal struggles. I could tell you some good stories about Peter all right, but I love him for those stumblings which are written in the Bible, but I know others that would really make your belly giggle. Judas found trusting really difficult and we spoke long and often, but, well, he wanted to leave our group, did you know that! He wanted to trust, but he had the purse and I am not sure he could trust that jingly coinage to anybody else. He had trust problems long before the, well, the....well, that night.”

Q. “Today we celebrate your having lived your faith. How does that fit with you?”

A. “No, you don’t celebrate me, you remember just a man who went out and let out what was in him. What was in him was the goodness Jesus gave me when I touched him. I wasn’t foolish by asking for validation or his credentials and I wasn’t foolish living and telling of what I received that day and every day of a very good way to live. I think you celebrate the fidelity of God, the presence of Jesus and the living energy of the Holy Spirit all of whom were there at the beginning, at the end and is now as much with you as ever it was with me. So enough questions or they’ll be calling you Doubter and you wouldn’t want that, would you Didymus?”

Larry Gillick, S.J.