

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, May 1st 2015

The Gospel passage for today always brings several songs to mind for me. From my days as a Vacation Bible School counselor, “Thomas Asked the Lord” still sticks in my head with its bouncy beat and robot sound effects. (It was from the space-themed program.) A sweeter, more comforting arrangement, “Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled” by David Haas, has sounded with those words since college.

It is with that contrasting background music playing behind the words that I begin to think how much I have in common with Thomas in this passage. I am what you might call “directionally challenged.” I rely heavily on my GPS because I can get easily turned around even in familiar places. I once made a wrong turn on the way to a piano lesson, a drive I had made at least a hundred times before, got lost in a residential area, and was late to the lesson. If there are one-way streets or highways with long gaps between exits, forget it. My final destination immediately goes into the GPS. Why waste time and gas trying to get there without step-by-step guidance along the way? In the same way, Thomas’ question seems very practical. “Lord, we don’t know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus responds, “I am the way. Know me.” Thomas’ question was the right one, even if he was thinking in terms of an earthly destination. Jesus corrects the context with his answer.

At this point, my background music changes to songs through which I can respond in prayer to Jesus’ answer: “Only This I Want” by John Foley, S.J.; “I Want to Walk as a Child of Light” by Kathleen Thomerson; “Lead Me, Lord” by John D. Becker; or “Guide My Feet,” a spiritual. This last one sums it up simply. If I were Thomas, I would continue the conversation by asking:

Guide my feet while I run this race, ‘cause I don’t want to run this race in vain.

Stand by me while I run this race, ‘cause I don’t want to run this race in vain.

Hold my hand while I run this race, ‘cause I don’t want to run this race in vain.

I’m your child while I run this race, ‘cause I don’t want to run this race in vain.

Guide my feet ‘til the race is over.

Stand by me ‘til the race is done.

Hold my hand while I’m crossing over.

I’m your child, lead me as I run.

Guide my feet, stand by me, hold my hand, I'm your child, 'cause I don't want to run this race in vain.

Molly Mattingly - Creighton University Campus Ministry & St. John's Parish