

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Third Sunday of Easter, April 30, 2017

This email, entitled Looking to Sunday®, focuses on one or more of the scripture readings for the coming Sunday. It prepares readers to hear God's Word at Mass and it offers a point of reflection to consider in the days leading to Sunday. Looking to Sunday is written by Father Tom Iwanowski.

A DOUBTING DUO

The apostles of Jesus are sometimes remembered because of their professions or their temperaments. For example, Peter is often called the Fisherman, John and James the Sons of Thunder, and Matthew the Tax Collector.

But Thomas is remembered in a less than flattering way. He was the disciple who refused to accept the news of the resurrection unless he could see and touch the Risen Lord. Thomas was the Doubter. In fact, his doubt is so well known that even to this day a skeptic is often called "a doubting Thomas."

However, in this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 24:13-35) we meet two disciples who were as skeptical and doubting as Thomas. We might call them the Doubting Duo.

These two disciples, one named Cleopas and the other left unnamed by Luke, are dejected and defeated as they make their way to the village of Emmaus. Jesus, the one on whom they had set their hopes, was dead – crucified by the Romans. So now it was time to leave Jerusalem, return home, and get on with their lives. They had followed the wrong man.

As they go, a stranger begins to walk with them and soon those disciples are revealing the reason for their dejection. They also inform him that "some women ... were at the tomb in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive."

Obviously, that report from some excited women about a vision of angels and a missing body did not alter what they knew for themselves: Jesus was dead. There was little doubt about that, but there was a mountain of doubt when it came to accepting the idea that a crucified man had risen from the dead and was alive.

But within a few minutes after arriving home in Emmaus, something changed. That Doubting Duo became believers who returned at once to Jerusalem proclaiming the wondrous news they had earlier discounted. The Lord had risen!

They went from doubt to believing because like Thomas, they were given the proof they needed. They were given the vision to recognize the Lord as he took, blessed, broke, and shared bread with them. They also came to realize how their hearts and minds had been changed as he "opened the Scriptures" to them as they walked along.

The Doubting Duo became a Pair of Believers when they got their proof – when they encountered the Risen Lord.

This Sunday's Gospel challenges us to ask ourselves why we believe in the resurrection of Jesus. After all, logic tells us what Doubting Thomas and the Doubting Duo initially thought – dead people stay dead.

Perhaps that Gospel can also give us part of the answer to that question. We are believers because we sense the presence of the Risen Lord as the scriptures are read, as the bread is broken, and as we walk the road of life with our fellow Christians.

As it was for Thomas and for the disciples on the road to Emmaus, our doubt is dispelled by an awareness that the Lord is with us!

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*May the peace and joy of the Risen Lord
be with you during this Easter Season!*