

A Prayer for the Easter Season.

Acknowledgment of Land, Seas, Skies and Waterways

As we begin the Season of Easter, with joy in our hearts and hope as our guide, we remember and acknowledge the First Nations Peoples who have walked upon and cared for the lands, seas, and waterways for millennia. We pay our respect to the Elders, past and present, and emerging as we continue to walk together on the journey towards reconciliation.



Image Bec Burns 2.4.22

Context of This Prayer

The Christian Community is in celebration for the Easter Season. This 50 Day season sees the people in Jesus' life feeling a myriad of emotions. Fear and horror at first due to the tragedy they witness to joy and amazement as his resurrection, and for some, doubt and worry for what this means for their future. Within this story there are parallels to life as parents in 2022.

Scripture

A Reading from the Gospel of John from the Gospel of the Day Sunday 24th April 2022. (John 20: 10 – 31)

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Jesus and Thomas

But Thomas (who was called the Twin^[a]), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

The Purpose of This Book

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe^[b] that Jesus is the Messiah,^[c] the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

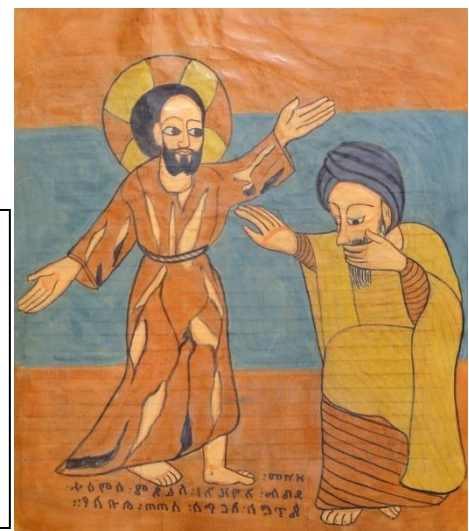
Reflection by Bec Burns

Consultant Formation, Identity and Outreach Directorate, Cairns Diocese

The saying 'Doubting Thomas' is popular and is used in religious and secular contexts in today's world. Doubt is not the only feeling in this story. If we consider the actions of the various disciples throughout this story, we can perhaps find a pattern in our own lives when we are living through hard times or just living life. Often tragedy and joy come like a paradox into our lives, especially when our child is ill, injured or experiences a traumatic situation. The awful news is delivered or discovered, and the depth of despair may be likened to the grief expressed by the disciples and followers of Jesus on Good Friday. Then we hear there is hope; treatment, surgeries, prayers, and anecdotal stories of people who have been through similar circumstances. After this enters the doubt, the fear, and what ifs, and we find it incredibly difficult to see any sign of hope. Then, through the voice of wise friends, or a reading, or some other encounter we may begin to see the signs of hope again and we begin to find ways forward, ways out of the darkness and hope in our life and the lives of those we love. What the disciples experience during the Easter Season is quite often what our lives resemble, drama, hope, sorrow, joy, doubt, assurance. The Easter Season, like Jesus Himself, is the fullness of humanity. As parents knowing our children will experience this fullness of humanity can be distressing. We forget the last part of John's chapter where he explains the purpose of why he put the Gospel together; so that people in the future, i.e., us, can remember to look for the signs that God is with us, that Jesus understands humanity and that in all situations there is hope for a full life. This is what the disciples encounter from Good Friday to Pentecost and is what we are charged to help our children navigate not avoid as we parent in confusing, uncertain, and joyful and hopeful times.

The doubting of Saint Thomas, miniature from a liturgical parchment book, Coptic manuscript, 18th-19th Century.. Photograph. Britannica ImageQuest, Encyclopædia Britannica, 25 May 2016.

quest.eb.com/search/126_151372/1/126_151372/cite. Accessed 13 Apr 2022.



Prayer by Rev Dr Jill Firth, accessed from <http://www.commongrace.org.au/>)

Lord Jesus,

You reign from the tree:

identifying with us, suffering with us, bringing healing and victory over sin and death.

In your sacrifice, draw us to yourself.

In your suffering, draw us near to all who suffer.

In your victory, bring healing to the nations.

Help us to trust you, to join in the fellowship of your sufferings, and to share your good news with people everywhere.

Amen.

Call to action

As a family call together any worries or doubts you have in your life. Light a small candle for each concern and ask for guidance and signs to help navigate this fear.

As a family, discuss the signs you see around you that assure you or give you comfort. These may be found in nature, such as butterflies or rainbows. It could be speaking to a trusted relative or friend. Assurance or peace may be found in listening to music or journaling.

