

sick or hope for the poor if the one who made the promises... ceased to exist?

Now Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come running from the tomb to claim they saw Him...Alive! "No Way!" you say. "I heard His final words and saw the spear thrust into His body. I saw Jesus die! I will not believe anything unless I see the nail wounds and place my hand into the wound on His side!"

Suddenly Jesus is standing there among us! "Peace be with you," He said. As He spoke, He held out His hands and we saw His wounded side. Most of us were filled with joy when we saw our Lord but not you. Then Jesus walks over and says to you: "Thomas, put your finger here in my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Do not be faithless any longer. Believe!" (John 20:20-27). What else can you say? "My Lord and my God! Please forgive me for doubting but I am so afraid!" Jesus replies: "You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have not seen me and believe anyway." Jesus is reassuring them, but something has changed. Then He said: "When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me by Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must all come true." Then Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scripture (Luke 24:44-45).

Finally, the disciples realize that Jesus' death and resurrection had a purpose and was predicted by Scripture. After years of confusion while sitting at Christ's feet, the teaching becomes clear. Then Jesus said: "With my authority, take this message of repentance to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: 'there is forgiveness for all who turn to me.' You are witness..." (Luke 24: 47-48).



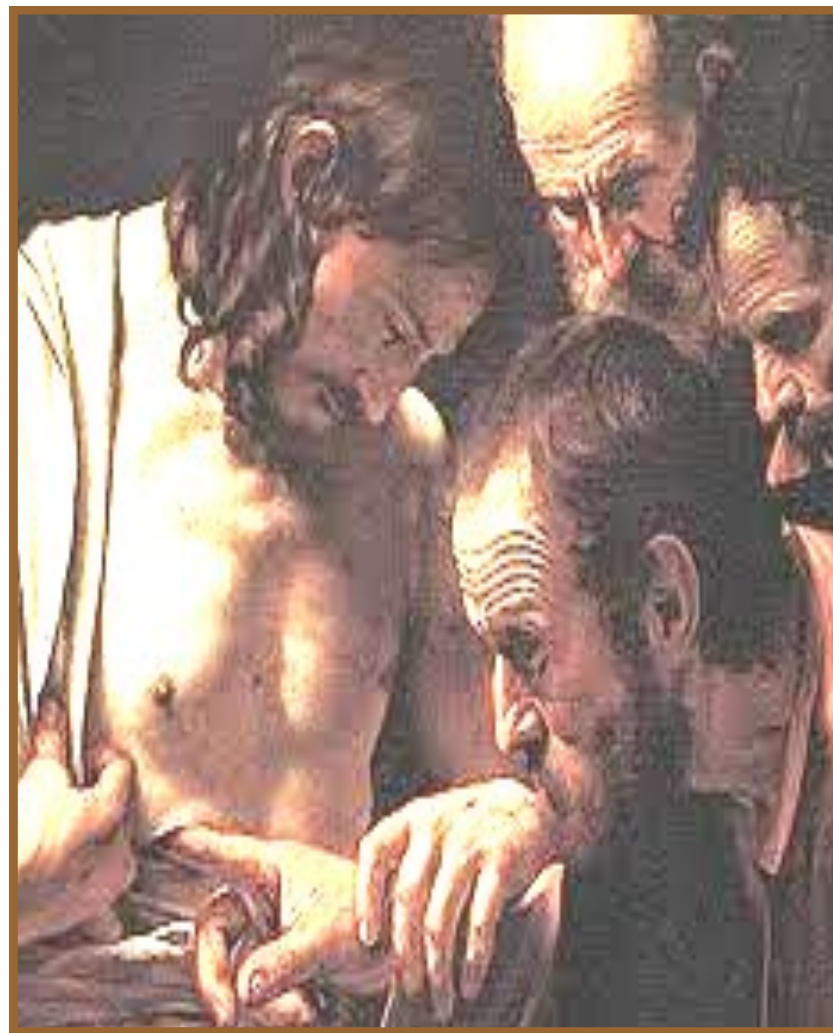
Reliquary containing the finger of St. Thomas.
Rome, Italy

Are you a Doubting Thomas? Are you holed-up, fearful, confused and desperately looking for answers and courage? Hear the Good News! Christ was dead! Christ is risen! Christ will come again! Easter is the promise that you will be filled with the power of God's Holy Ghost so do not be afraid. ** (excerpted from: sowingseedsoffait.com)

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Doubting Thomas?

Feast Day: December 21st



Christ said to Thomas,
*"Put your finger here and see my hands;
and put out your hand and place it in my side;
be not faithless, but believing."*

Doubting Thomas?

*"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" (John 20:25). So said Thomas, one of Christ's twelve disciples, in response to the joyful news of those who had seen their crucified and buried Teacher risen from the dead. Eight days later, as recorded in the gospels, when the disciples once again were all together, Christ appeared and told Thomas: "Put your finger here and see my hands; and put out your hand and place it in my side; be not faithless, but believing." And Thomas exclaimed: "My Lord and my God!" Then Christ told him: "You have believed because you have seen me; blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe...(John 20:24-31).

What a story. But it is not a complete picture. Thomas is mentioned as one of the twelve apostles in each of the Gospels, but in John we get more insight into this "Doubting" Apostle. In John, Chapter 11, we read the story of Lazarus. Lazarus lived in Judea. Lazarus' sisters told Jesus of Lazarus' illness and, in the course of time, He said to His disciples, "Let us go to Judea." Paraphrasing what the disciples said: "Are you crazy? They just tried to kill you there! Now you want to go back?" So Jesus gently explains that Lazarus is dead, and again says, "Let us go to him." And who responds? Thomas responds to what Jesus plans on doing. Thomas is not doubting this time. He knows his life may be forfeited for showing up in Judea with Jesus. Even so Thomas says, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." Granted that Thomas flees Jesus on Good Friday, but on this day He was prepared to die with Jesus, if necessary. He made a conscious decision that whatever his Lord and Savior went, there also would he go, even if he did not know where Jesus was going.

In John 14, Jesus is attempting to tell his disciples that He must die. Jesus says: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you I go prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And

you know the way to the place where I am going" (John 14:1-4).

Thomas, ever practical, states the obvious, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" He is not doubting, just seeking direction, knowing Jesus will tell him. How does Jesus answer him? Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen Him" (John 14:6-7).

Sometimes, we may wonder how Jesus could put up with some of the questions His disciples asked. Why did they not get it? The answer is in understanding what it means to love unconditionally and where patience needs to be practiced.

What we must realize is that we have seen something that the Apostles at that time had not seen. At the time Jesus was speaking to them, they knew Christ. We, on the other hand, know Christ, and Him crucified. A little later in chapter 14, Jesus talks about the Holy Ghost, a gift we have here and now, that was still to come for the disciples. What seems obvious to us is proof that hindsight is 20-20.

*(excerpted from: www.finsel.com)

**Anyone could be a Doubting Thomas...even you. Imagine being holed up inside a house, fearful, confused and desperately seeking answers. What happened? Your leader, spiritual guide and closet friend was brutally tortured and executed. The word out on the street is about a mob searching for you and your friends. While fearfully huddling together, you have to wonder...who will be murdered next?

Eleven frightened disciples followed Jesus faithfully until...the cross. Could there be a Kingdom if the king was dead? Could there be miracles with the miracle worker murdered? Could you offer sight to the blind, healing to the