

Opening the Word: This Easter season, we're all Thomas



Thomas misses the whole thing. On that first Easter Sunday, when confusion reigns among the disciples, he alone is not present. He is not there when our Lord Jesus comes into the room, manifesting to the disciples the glorified wounds of love. He is not among those who hear the words of mission from the mouth of our Savior.

Thomas doubts the veracity of the whole story. Unless he's the one who gazes on the wounds, unless he places his hands in his very side, he will not believe.

Of course, a week later Our Lord does appear once more. He appears to Thomas, placing his hands in his side, letting him touch the glorified wounds. And Our Lord pronounces to the gathered disciples that blessed are those who do not see and yet believe.

In a typical Easter season, that's us. We may try our best to remain humble about the whole thing, but Our Lord is offering the faithful Church militant a blessing. We are among those absent from the Upper Room; we are those who did not encounter our resurrected Lord in the flesh. And yet, we believe.

[April 19 – Second Sunday of Easter](#)

Acts 2:42-47

Ps 118:2-4, 13-15,
22-24

1 Pt 1:3-9

Jn 20:19-31

But this is decidedly not a typical Easter season. With this virus still wreaking its havoc across our country, most have

something in common with Thomas.

We're also not there.

You see, in the end, the Christian faithful do not see the resurrected Lord face to face. But we do see him through sacramental signs. It is Our Lord who has sanctified the waters of baptism, it is Our Lord who speaks through the proclamation of the holy Gospel; it is Our Lord who offers praise to the Father as the Christian faithful sing its hallelujah; it is Our Lord who, in a hidden way, becomes present to us in the Eucharist.

This year, we've been asked to give all of that up. We don't even have the consolation that those early Christians experienced in the Book of Acts, the presence of the faithful, who share all things in common.

And what many of us have seen in recent weeks is not the glory of the Resurrection but the reality of death. On the screens of our television, we've seen the suffering of the citizens of New York and New Orleans, of Seattle and Detroit, and likely our own community.

"Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed" (Jn 20:29).

And we cry out, how long O Lord until we can see you? How long until we behold your face in our fellow parishioners, in the sacred art of our parish church, in the body and blood of Our Lord? How long will we suffer from this death-dealing virus?

And yet, let's look again. Our Lord plunges the hands of Thomas into his wounds. Perhaps, this is what Easter is about.

The suffering of the human has not ceased; the fragile wounds of humanity have not dissipated.

It is only through entering the wounds of Christ, like Thomas, that we can believe and see.

In this strangest of Easter seasons, then, let us enter more fully the wounds of Our Lord. Let us attend to the crucifix in our homes, see there the suffering God-man who came to redeem the world. Let us gather money and resources for those who are struggling to feed their families. Let us find ways to reach out to the lonely.

In this Easter of “not seeing,” we’re invited to a new way of seeing and believing alike.

This year, as it turns out, we’re all Thomas.

Timothy P. O’Malley, Ph.D., is the director of education at the McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame.