



Dear God,
Thank you for another
day. Please watch over
my family, friends, and
whoever is reading this.
I pray You would bless
them and keep them
safe. Amen

Peace Be with You

John 20:19–31

“Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

April 23, 2017

Thought for the Week

Scripture: Acts 2:42-47 • 1 Peter 1:3-9 • John 20:19-31

There seems to be a rather peculiar phenomenon going on in our world today; perhaps it's always been there, but at least it appears more obvious in our times. Why do we have such a hard time understanding one another? We live in a time of high-powered technological communication and yet there is so much doubt among us.

Instead of trusting each other's word on some issue we invariably insist on going to so-called “trusted services”: we check first with NBC, CBS, ABC, CBS, NPR, Huff Post, USA Today, Fact Checkers and especially with good old Google. In other words, we consult the experts rather than trust our intuitions. In short, so often we seem like doubters; we insist on fact and truth based on what we can prove.

At this time of year, after Easter, the scriptures always describe for us a classic case of doubt. Thomas the apostle refuses to believe that Jesus, the one whom he had followed all these many months, the one whom he had seen die on the cross had risen from the dead and was now actually speaking to him once again.

To be honest, I really believe that Thomas has been badly treated over all the centuries. He simply wanted to make sure that his senses were not deceiving him. So, he insisted on touching Jesus' body, yes, even the wounds on his hands, feet and side. That would be proof enough that this was still the same Jesus of Nazareth in whom he believed. Most of us would do the same.

At the same time, we who are Christian believers face the same dilemma almost every day: we are asked to believe in many of our Christian doctrines that cannot be proven. We believe in the Communion, in the Trinity, in the trustworthiness of the scriptures and many others. There is no way to prove any of these except by way of our trust that God will not deceive us.

In the natural world where we live there are also countless mysteries that we take for granted: the orderliness of the cosmos, our assumption that day follows night, that the sun will rise tomorrow, that our planet will not suddenly destroy itself.

From my own point of view, I believe our greatest source of trust must lie in one another and in the communities that we are part of. If we cannot rely on these, we are in deep trouble.

We have a fine example of community trust in today's first reading from the Acts of the Apostles. The community of Jesus' believers is just beginning to form. Luke, the author of Acts tells us that they were devoted to community life, to daily prayer and the breaking of the bread (Communion). They shared all things in common and divided what they had with those in need. They took their meals in common and praised God day by day.

It seems obvious that this is one of the reasons why the early church grew so quickly, they trusted each other and were determined that this great adventure of Jesus should not fail.

Today, we in the Community of Christ are obviously part of a larger and more complicated church, but in many ways we resemble those early Christian communities cited in the Acts of the Apostles. We trust in the same faith, we celebrate the breaking of the bread each Month; we do what we can to care for those who struggle with less.

In some mysterious way our members and other Christians of today strive to touch Jesus Christ as Thomas did and like those early Christians also did. It all takes place each month when we make our act of faith, break bread together and discover that the living Christ is sitting right next to us.

Happy Birthday – Sabrina (4/29) & Thomas

Peace Be With You

When we think about the word "peace" we tend to conjure up images of war torn regions of the world with all the fear, violence and bloodshed that goes with it. How we wish and pray that these atrocities could end. For many of us we live in relative peace and calm, not ever knowing the experience and horrors of war. Although we can't truly know what it is like to be trapped in these conflicts, we can try to imagine. And for the images alone we pray that peace can exist across the world. If a global peace could be created then the fear of war and violence ever being placed upon us could be eliminated. Every individual in this world deserves to live their lives free of the fear of violence, able to follow the opportunities that present themselves to make better lives.

Peace can be hard to find when all the negative aspects seem to be highlighted. It is a very sad aspect of our society and media that only the "bad" news makes news. It is very seldom that good news hits the headlines and this paints an extremely negative picture of our world. How can we find peace when we live in fear of "recession" or "global warming". Yes we have to see the photos and moving images of starvation because this is the reality of what is happening to some people on Gods' earth. But, the good news is that this creates the movement of people willing to help, determined to make massive contributions towards the elimination of poverty throughout the world. Gods' world is full of beauty, full of abundance if we choose to see it. By taking this route, believing that we can have rich and fulfilling lives enables us to be at peace with the world.

How many of us struggle to get on with certain individuals? Maybe we have arguments with the nextdoor neighbor or there is somebody at work that we can never see eye to eye with. Our judgments of these people are clouded by the negative aspects of our relationships with them and we fear the next confrontation that we may have with them. Yet the truth is that there is good and bad in everybody and for the vast majority the good far out weighs the bad. We must try to see the positive traits in the personalities of others and learn to appreciate and celebrate these. If we can focus on the good characteristics of the people around us we can very soon learn to "love thy neighbor" and be at peace with them also.

We probably have all come across the phrase "you can't expect others to love you if you can't love yourself". Likewise, it is difficult to find peace with the world and our neighbor if we cannot find peace within our own hearts. And this at times can be very difficult to find. We all have our trials and tribulations. Redundancy, lack of financial security or even fear of stepping into the unknown can make sleeping at night troublesome. It is a much-used cliché, but "we all only have one life". As much as we can try to visualize the future so that we can fulfill our dreams, the truth is in the present. What we do today is what matters therefore we should make the most of each day. Worrying about the future only affects your moods now. Acting positively on solutions now, and enjoying what today brings will establish peace of mind and a restful heart.

Consider the Optimism of Peace

*It Is Like Reaching Out and
Shaking the Hand of God*