



April 24, 2022

Second Sunday of Easter

Divine Mercy Sunday

...Jesus came and stood in their midst... John 20:19



Dear Friends;

The village rabbi and a soapmaker went for a walk together. The soapmaker said, *“What good is religion? Look at all the trouble and misery in the world! Even after years—thousands of years—of teaching about goodness, truth, and peace. Even after all the prayers, sermons, and teachings nothing seems changed. If religion is true, why should this be?”* The rabbi said nothing. They continued walking until he noticed a child playing in the gutter.

Then the rabbi said, *“Look at that child. You say that soap makes people clean but see how that child is covered in dirt. Of what good is soap? With all the soap in the world, over all these years, the child is still filthy. I wonder how effective soap is after all!”*

The soapmaker protested, “But, Rabbi, soap cannot do any good unless it is used!” “Exactly,” replied the rabbi. “Exactly!”

Too many of us have too high a level of conviction and a crippling lack of curiosity. We are so ready with all the answers that we have forgotten what exactly the questions are. We are so ready to defend our faith that we missed the thrill of discovering faith for ourselves. We settle for answers that someone else gave us. Alfred Lord Tennyson wrote. *“There lives more faith in honest doubt, believe me, than in half the creeds.”*

Today’s Gospel passage about doubting Thomas challenges us to work through our doubts. Doubt can be an important part of our growth. Where would we be if we did not have people who doubted? Peter would doubt the necessity for gentile Christians to keep Kosher restrictions. Martin Luther doubted the idea that salvation could be purchased. What if Galileo had not doubted the cosmology of his time that said the sun revolved around the earth, rather than the earth revolves around the sun? What if people had not doubted the legitimacy of monarchy and slavery? Our world is what it is because of the doubters.

Doubt can be a mechanism by which our faith grows. The faith we had as seven-year-olds is perfect for when you are seven. But not when you are seventy. We can be so convinced that we had God right that it never occurred to us that we might be wrong. We must learn that there is a difference between doubting God and doubting what we believe about God.

The challenge that the first disciples had to deal with is the crucifixion of Jesus. No one expected a Messiah who would die such an ignominious death. But the resurrection confronts them with a reality that forces them to take another look about what they believed about God. The doubts that Thomas expresses were legitimate. But confronted by the presence of the Risen Christ he comes to a new level of faith and understanding.

We live in times that are challenging our understandings of God. The Pandemic, the war in the Ukraine and struggle between freedom and democracy versus totalitarianism and nationalism forces us to ask where is God amidst it all? Yet even though we may not see we believe the goodness of God is here.

Christ is Risen!

Fr Ron

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