



St. Thomas, the Apostle

Feast Day: July 3rd

Today, we celebrate St. Thomas – one of the Twelve. Little is known about Thomas, the apostle, but he had many missionary qualities associated with him. Impetuous. Devoted. Courageous. Doubtful.

The nickname, “Doubting Thomas,” still lives on today because it was Thomas who questioned whether Jesus had truly risen in John 20: 24-25. Thomas was not with the disciples in the locked room when Jesus appeared to them saying, “Peace be with you.” It is important to remember that Jesus showed these disciples his hands and his side, and the “disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.” (John 20:20) Thomas was not there. He responded to their declaration of the Resurrection with doubt, challenging their assertion by demanding to actually touch the wounds to verify the risen Lord. His belief – in this moment – hinged on his personal encounter with God. Jesus understands and meets that need by inviting Thomas to put his hands in his wounds. Thomas exclaims, “My Lord and My God.” This is also representative of Thomas because there were other moments when Thomas’ faith in Jesus was courageous and bold.

When Jesus heard about Lazarus’ condition (John 11), he proclaims “this illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” The disciples responded very concerned and distressed about going to Bethany, because of its proximity to Judea where Jesus would be killed. It was dangerous and deadly – for all of them – and yet, it was Thomas who boldly said, “Let us go die with him.” (John 11:16)

Thomas was devoted to Jesus during his public ministry. If anything, his doubt after the Crucifixion demonstrates his humanity. It underlines the undeniable fact that we all encounter doubt in our faith journey. [Franciscan Media](#) kindly offers this reflection: “*Christ did not pick worthless men. But their human weakness again points up the fact that holiness is a gift of God, not a human creation; it is given to ordinary men and women with weaknesses; it is God who gradually transforms the weaknesses into the image of Christ, the courageous, trusting, and loving one.*”

Thomas, along with the other apostles, went forth proclaiming the Gospel after Pentecost. Tradition says Thomas ultimately reached India, carrying the Faith to the Malabar coast, which still boasts a large native population calling themselves “Christians of St. Thomas.” Unfortunately, according to Tradition, Thomas was killed in an accident when a fowler shot at a peacock and struck Thomas instead. Some of his relics were taken to Edessa while the rest were kept in India.

Thomas was a true missionary who went beyond himself, strayed out of his comfort zone, crossed numerous borders to take the Gospel to India, risked encountering strangers from distant lands – all for the love of Jesus, who Thomas called: “My Lord and My God.”

St. Thomas, pray for us.

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