Good Morning,

For many people this is the weekend that we choose to bask in the glow of Easter. After all, we are an Easter people and the resurrection is the best news we will ever receive. After every major celebration there is a return to normal experience. It often includes debt, relationship struggles and endless minor hassles that seem to distract us from our joy. Indeed the world can seem to be experiencing an ever evolving new kind of crazy. There is death, destruction, disillusionment and dismay all around us. It is hard to remember that God will have the last word. Perhaps we can receive good news in this week’s gospel from John.

Let me begin by saying that practically everyone sees the resurrected Jesus. Many of them receive a special commission for service. All seems to be going well. One might even say triumphant, exciting, life changing or even a new beginning. And then along comes Thomas. Now let’s try to be gentle with Thomas. Some say that this is the infamous doubting Thomas who ruined the moment and left everyone involved shattered beyond repair. That seems like a rather pessimistic view to me. But it does follow our human nature to try to find somebody to blame.

So let’s try and take a theological and spiritual look at what might have really happened with Thomas. Again some would say that the critique against Thomas was that he didn’t have enough faith to believe without seeing. But this actually goes a lot deeper than you and I might think. You see, by rejecting the good news about Jesus from his friends whom he had shared years of mutual experiences, he hurt their feelings. He challenged the status quo. He may have embarrassed them in front of others. He seemed to be going a different direction. But, why is this incident really important? Well, to start, in John’s gospel love and trust in the community are significant expressions of the work of Christ in the disciples midst. So the real question is, what did Thomas miss? How didn’t he get it? After all, his words from the Greek translation are, “There’s no way I will believe unless I see it for myself.”

It’s hard for us to appreciate that his friends’ experience of Jesus was not enough for him. Furthermore, we need to consider that the disciples may have been thinking that the community that Jesus tried to establish throughout the gospel is threatened from this moment on. Thomas’ scepticism could threaten the entire original community. Now wait a minute. Are some trying to say that confusion, suspicion or anxiety in faith tears at the very fabric of Christianity today? Are some trying to say that there are real Christians and not so real Christians? Are there those who are actually trying to say that they have the right to establish the criteria for what a true believer looks and sounds like? Is it possible that in our search for the “truth” we may well be advised to re-examine our preoccupations and to explore new insights. After all, what would happen if we suddenly discovered ancient writings that revealed more about Jesus’ life between the ages of 12 and 30? Could that provide new, valuable information that would be a blessing for everyone?

In our contemporary culture there seems to be a propensity to question motives, doubt dedication and often assume the worst of others. There is an obvious irritation when someone offers a different opinion or even asks a soul searching question. Maybe there is something new to hear, see, feel, and learn. Isn’t that what happened in the gospels when the women and later the men announced, “We have seen the Lord”? After all Thomas did announce, “My Lord and my God”.

For me the real hope is that we can sometimes have confidence in our friends, experience (testimony) that carries us in the midst of our doubts. The real adventure for us is to understand that hearing and seeing the gospel in action are crucial for our spiritual formation and growth. Praise God for the blessing of sanctification whereby we have a lifetime of relationship with Christ to be blessed by God and to be a blessing to others.