

April 28th St Johns 9am and Christ the King
10.30am Eucharist service,s .

May I speak from my heart and may the holy
spirit guide me .Amen

This sunday is known as low sunday ,this
might be because its the first , after easter
sunday and all the celebrations ,making this
seem like just as ordinary sunday at church .

But that is totally wrong ,This is not the first
week after Easter it is the second week OF
Easter .

Easter has not come to an end ,but instead
this is a new beginning ,the start of new life, a
new year in Christ ,a time to go forwards in
faith .

Today we have listened to the story of
Doubting Thomas. I don't know why he has
kept that name ,as if it was me there at that
time ,I too would of doubted.

Just imagine you have been told that the tomb
where the body of Jesus had been laid, was
found to be empty and being very fearful that
the authorities had stolen his body ,we all go

into hiding .

But you need to go out and get something so you slip quietly out and upon your return are met by the other disciples all talking at once to you ,they are excited and very animated ,you manage to get them to stop and tell you calmly what it is they are all raving about .

Jesus was here , he has come back from the dead ,he was talking with them .

Yes-- are they playing a joke on me ,telling me, he got into our locked room and stood amongst them saying" Peace be with you" and showing them his hands and side .?

So I tell them I wont believe them untill I can see Jesus for myself and see the nail marks in his hands and put my hand into his pierced side .

Seven days later whilst we are all still safe in our locked room ,Jesus appears to us all again and says "peace be with you " then to myself" see here ,the marks where the nails have been and put your hand in my side ,do not doubt but believe "

I exclaimed "My Lord and My God !"

Jesus then went onto say "have you believed because you have seen me ? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe "

Jesus had breathed the holy spirit into them ,so they now felt stronger and began to go out and spread the good news of Jesus resurrection from the dead, throughout the World .

I don't know about you but I think its fair to say we all suffer Doubt .

Doubt is part of our Human Nature ,we have to see things or feel things for our self to believe .

Today with all sorts of media to bombard us with news from abroad or from just up the road we still say we dont believe it like when watching the first few minutes of 9--11. I was working in a womans house repairing her boiler where she had the Tv on in the kitchen showing the attack ,I said" that looks like a very good film whats it called "

"Its not a film "she said in disbelief "This is

really happening right now in america "

We both couldn't take it in and even swapped TV channels to see if she had accidentally, had switched onto the movie channel even though we could see it, for a short moment we had doubted it, our human side didn't want us to believe in such horror .

It's an awful thing when you hear of a death or tell someone about a death ,the most common thing people say is "you are Joking" because again we know it's true ,people wouldn't joke about this ,but it's our human nature again, taking control of our negative thoughts, we want too even for a split second, not believe it.

There are so many times we doubt things ,when faced with an exam ,we doubt we will pass it , we don't believe in our own capability, we doubt we have done enough revision, or enough practise if it's a practical exam, like the great British Bake off .

Watch the contestants sweating and struggling to produce the perfect cake, have they remembered all they have been shown ?

Yes doubting is a Human condition often

brought about by the fear of not believing something we are told or sometimes something we see.

In the reading from Acts ,we see that the disciples are going out now and starting to preach about Jesus but the Council bring them in and the High Priest questions them ,telling them that they had strict instructions not to teach in Jesus's name ,yet they had filled Jerusalem with his teachings and that they were determined to bring his blood upon their hands .

But Peter and the apostles tell them that they must obey God rather than human authority as the God of our ancestors raised up Jesus,, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree .For God had exalted him to his right hand as a leader and a saviour ,so everyone in Israel might have repentance and forgiveness of sins .

We are the witnesses to these things and so is the Holy spirit ,whom God has given to those who obey him .

This is a very thought provoking passage and

its one that I think you should read again for yourselves when you get home .

To be honest you need to read the whole chapter as it gives you more incite into just what the disciples went through when they started out on their ministry ,as this reading only covers a short sequence of events it doesnt give you the whole picture.

The human nature of course is there again in so many of the characters written about . They all doubted, they all feared ,they were protecting themselves by Doubting and other such thoughts and actions .

In Revelations John just tells them straight this message is from The God who is , The God who was and The God who is about to arrive . The message is simple its about God sending down his first born son ,who we killed, but his blood spilling out washed our sins away ,but yet we still, await his return ,where we will see his splendour ,the firstborn of God raised up from the dead and see those who mocked him, tear their clothes and cry out to him . Its a straight forward message to stop doubting

and believe ,trust in God and in the resurrection .

Thomas is thought to have gone onto India and brought many to know all about God and christainty.It is believed he was killed as he was kneeling in prayer in front of a cross by a spear through his heart . The city was called Calamine which he had lived in at one time . He was buried at Mylapore on december 21st 72AD.

Thomas managed to overcome his human weakness by his stead fast ministry and it shows us all that by our own curiosity and searching it also can lead us into a deep belief in Jesus Christ ,its shows it is good to question everything .

So our human nature makes us doubt things ,but maybe like Thomas that is not such a bad thing if it brings us ever closer to God.

So St Thomas is the patron saint of people struggling with Doubt , He is also the patron saint of the Blind ,Architects ,builders, carpenters , construction workers ,stone masons ,surveyors, and Theologians and in

such places as Italy ,Indonesia ,pakistan ,India and Sri lanka.

so Its time to stop the doubt and believe ,remember Jesus told Thomas" blessed are those who have not seen, yet believe .

So read your bibles ,get to know all about God and Jesus understand the message and believe .

So let us pray ,

Dear Lord ,Help us to believe in all that we could be ,and in all that we do ,show us the way we need to go,and to take one day at a time .

We pray for our churches here in the Shirley Parish, and that your love will encourage us to reach out to everyone and help us to overcome our human nature of fears and Doubt and trust in your will for us all .Amen.