

Reading for the Feast of St Thomas, Apostle

3rd July 2026

First reading

Ephesians 2:19-22

‘Built on the foundation of the Apostles.’

Brothers and Sisters: You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy Temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 117(116):1. 2. R Mark 16:15

Go into all the world and proclaim the good news.

O praise the Lord, all you nations;

acclaim him, all you peoples!

For his mercy has prevailed over us;

and the faithfulness of the Lord endures for ever.

Gospel Acclamation

John 20:29

Alleluia, alleluia.

You believed, Thomas, because you have seen me, says the Lord.

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

Alleluia.

Gospel

John 20:24-29

‘My Lord and my God!’

Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord’. But he said to them, ‘Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.’

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.’ Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’

Short reflection on the reading for today

What was wrong with Thomas the twin? Why was he such a doubter? On Easter Day, the other disciples had experienced the risen Jesus, vividly. He appeared among them – mysteriously – even though the doors were shut. To prove that he was no mere ghostly apparition, but the same Jesus who had been crucified, he showed them his hands and his side. They all recognised him as the very one they knew and loved, for he spoke with the same kindness and with the same authority as before. There was recognisable continuity, as well as something mysterious and new. He wished them peace, breathed new heart into them, gave them their mission and shared his spirit with them. But Thomas was not there to share their experience, so his first instinct was to dismiss it as an illusion. Thomas was a born sceptic, unwilling or unable to believe in good news.

About Thomas’s innate pessimism we get some earlier hints in John’s Gospel. When Jesus, against the wishes of his disciples, decided to go up to Jerusalem, it was Thomas who took a gloomy view of the idea:

“Yes, let us also go to die with him” (Jn 11:16). Characteristically, he expected the worst. “When, on another occasion Jesus assured his disciples that by dying he’d be returning to the Father, Thomas objected: “We do not know where you are going, how can we know the way?” (Jn 14:4, 5). It’s not so surprising then, when the others were telling him of the Resurrection, that Thomas ran true to form: “Unless I can see the holes that the nails made in his hands. . . and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe” (Jn 20:25).

We must be grateful to Thomas for arguing as he did. His being slow to believe shows he was a doubter by temperament like so many of us. His recovery of faith can help us renew our faith, to vicariously put our fingers into the holes and our hand into the Lord’s side. He needed the visual and the tactile; he wanted solid proof. Ultimately, he needed a personal encounter with the risen Lord.

How might the Congregation for Doctrine and the Faith have treated a person like Thomas, who publicly voiced his doubts? Would they have silenced and sidelined him from being an apostle, by a process both secretive and authoritarian? In responding with such understanding to Thomas’s scepticism, Jesus was considerate of us all. No Gospel scene about the Resurrection is more tangible than this one. For all his doubting, Thomas became a channel of faith for us. He responded with the loveliest prayer of all – more than an act of faith, an act of commitment and surrender: “My Lord and my God!”