

# Doubter!

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April 11, 2010

Poor Thomas! The poor guy has one instance of doubting and for two thousand years, he is known as “doubting Thomas.” His name is synonymous with those who lack faith in all circumstances. But the fact is that it seems he just had one bad day. History has put little emphasis on his positive traits or the times he did have faith. Remember in the Gospel of John, when Jesus is going to Judea, the apostles try to discourage him from going, fearing that he may be stoned if he returns there. While the others are saying, “Don’t go,” it is Thomas who says, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.” Most people don’t remember that. Is that the voice of a doubter?

This tendency to dwell on Thomas’ shortcomings is all too common. There is something in us that seems to want to focus on shortcomings instead of strengths. How many times do we think about the faults of others before we think of their strengths? It seems somehow easier to think about those things at which we have failed instead of our successes. Too often there is a fixation on sin, instead of virtue. This is all a result of original sin and is something we have to fight against our whole lives.

I wonder what the other apostles thought was going to happen when Jesus came back to see Thomas. Judging from their past attitudes and behaviors, I wonder if they weren’t thinking that Jesus was going to really give Thomas “what for” for being a doubter. They seemed to find it rather easy to argue about which of them was the best and who had the greatest strengths. But Jesus’ response to Thomas and his doubt is a kind and gentle one: “Do not be unbelieving, but believe.” He does not even seem very surprised that Thomas’ faith was weak. After His three years with the apostles, I am not sure anything they would have done would have surprised Jesus that much. Does he blame Thomas for his shortcoming? He does not. Instead, he gently leads him to faith.

That is the message of this Divine Mercy Sunday. On this day, we focus on the tremendous mercy that Jesus has for sinners and His love for us, even when we doubt and lack faith. The answer to questions and doubts is a simple one: bring them to Jesus and let Him show us His truth in His gentle and merciful way.