

4/8/18 Jn. 20: 19-31 & Acts 4: 32-35

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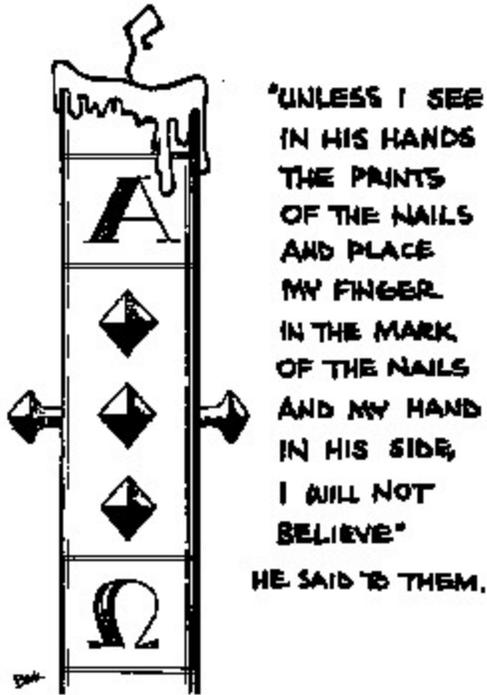
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ENTERING THE SCENE:

"Peace be with you." Over and over, Jesus repeats this greeting. The cowering apostles needed to hear this message more than once in order to receive Jesus' words of forgiveness and commissioning. Today we focus on Thomas who is a stand in for many of us as we try to accept that the resurrection is truth. Hopefully, like Thomas, once we open ourselves to this truth everything changes dramatically. Then we notice that Jesus is including us as those blessed to receive the faith from those who went before us. We stand on all those shoulders of believers who were willing to bet their lives on the grand revelation of God's victory over death. Margot Patterson tells us; "By faith, I don't mean signing up for a set of catechistic beliefs. I mean the recognition of wonder that pulls one's self out of one's self into the life of prayer."

Jn. 20:19-31

19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for **fear** of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "**Peace be with you!**" 20 After he said this, he **showed** them his hands and side. The disciples were **overjoyed** when they saw the Lord. 21 Again Jesus said, "**Peace be with you!** As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he **breathed** on them and said, "Receive the **Holy Spirit**. 23 If you **forgive** anyone his sins, they are **forgiven**; if you do not **forgive** them, they are not **forgiven**." 24 Now **Thomas** (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "**Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.**" 26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and **Thomas** was with them. Though the doors were **locked**, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "**Peace be with you!**" 27 Then he said to **Thomas**, "Put your finger here; see my hands. **Reach** out your hand and put it into my side. Stop **doubting** and **believe**." 28 **Thomas** said to him, "**My Lord and my God!**" 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have **believed**; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have **believed**." 30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by **believing** you may have **life** in his name.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: The one constant thing that Jesus asks us to never doubt is God's unconditional love. How are you doing with this challenge?

PRAYER: "Touch my wound," you say. / Trembling with dread, / I stretch out my hand. / I fall inside you, / and universes open in me. / I see that your wound / is my own, is everyone's / and it is limitless. / Yet you wrap yourself around it / so tenderly. / You become the shore / of that restless ocean. / I am too small to understand, / but I say, "My Lord, my God." / I am weeping in relief. / This is all the faith I have, / and all I need. Amen.

(Mary Vineyard: Lubec, Maine)