

Second Sunday of Easter (A)

During excavations in Egypt during the 1920's, archaeologists found a handful of wheat in a tomb belonging to one of its ancient Kings. The wheat would have been about 5000 years old. Someone decided to plant the grains and, to their amazement, they grew and came to life.

My faith in the Resurrection will be like those dormant grains until I know Jesus as a real living person who touches my life in the here and now with His reassuring presence.

There is an old French proverb which says: 'God often visits us but mostly we are not at home'. That's what happened to doubting Thomas. We're 'not at home' if our faith in Him is merely academic or if we believe that science explains everything. That doesn't at all mean the Church is anti-science as some make out. The first Observatory in the world, for instance, was in the Vatican. The first Universities in Europe which became the model of all universities were mostly founded by the Church and included faculties on natural philosophy and physics. I know the church censured Galileo but it wasn't because the Church discounted his theory that the Earth circled the Sun, as some make out, but because they wanted him to treat it as a hypothesis rather than the undisputed truth but he told them where to go. That was the nub of the problem. The protestant Church at the time completely condemned his theory as anti-scriptural.

Thomas would not believe that Jesus had risen until he'd seen Him in the flesh. But Jesus gently tells him: *'blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe'*. Well, that includes us.

The resurrection has more to do with transformation of the inner man or woman than seeing Him in the flesh. If Jesus were to walk into this church right now, after all the initial exhilaration had died down, would there be any guarantee that

we would go out and live more ardent Christian lives? I doubt it. Jesus didn't come down from the Cross when challenged because he knew that if he did, the people would still not believe in Him. He worked hundreds of miracles for all to see but they still put Him on the Cross. It's a bit like the moon landing in 1969. Many people still believe it was all a fabrication no matter what the evidence.

The doctrine of the resurrection is the cornerstone on which our Christianity rests. Tamper with that and we shake the foundations of our Christian faith. St Paul reminds us that 'if Christ is not risen then all our believing is in vain'.

The Church wasn't built on 'doubting thomasas' but on the unshakable belief that Jesus rose from the dead in his human body and is with us in the church until the end of time.

Thomas wanted to touch the Lord's wounds. But it is he who is touched when the Risen Jesus pays him a surprise visit. We are not surprised by His visit to us in Holy Communion. There we draw close to Him.