Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy) April 16, 2023

From the Desk of Fr. Leo

Although it may not, in fact, be one of our cultural charisms, I think we Americans at least imagine ourselves to be a bold, self-possessed people. We condition our children to have a "winning attitude," promote the power of positive thinking, and proclaim as part of our national heritage the conviction that any position can be attained and any goal achieved as long as we posses in sufficient quantities that indispensable American virtue, confidence. For those afflicted by self-doubt or even quiet caution, we readily prescribe counseling or assertiveness training, and hope that after these experiences such individuals can attain at least those minimum levels of tenacity and self-assurance which our society demands.

Given this cultural context, it is possible that the gospel proclaimed this weekend could be construed as subversive and quite un-American: for it unabashedly features a doubter at center stage, surrounds him with a timorous group of disciples (who hide behind locked doors even after they have experienced the risen Christ), and presents Jesus unfazed by the skepticism and anxiety which run rampant among his followers. Such a gospel certainly does not serve to strengthen the national will or motivate the faint-hearted, and instead appears to be an unsettling proof text for fear and doubt. Quite frankly one wonders how such a skittish band of disciples ever gave birth to that idyllic, faith-filled community which we heard about in this weekend's first reading.

What this gospel offers us in St. Thomas, however, is probably not an apostolic coward or even a first-rate skeptic, but rather a flesh-and-blood representative of the fledgling church in its pre-Easter faith. Stunned by the arrest of Jesus, and scattered by his trial and death, the early disciples were unquestionably a bewildered, floundering group following that Friday we have come to know as "Good." It is clear, however, that at least initially this eventful day was not good for them, and it appeared to be the definite end to an impressive, but short-lived, success story named Jesus.

Yet it was from the ashes of this apostolic doubt that faith arose. More over, the early community's experience of disbelief was probably an important preparatory step for its future life in faith; for doubting like believing, presumed abandoning human surety in the search from other truths. Consequently, the first disciples needed to surrender much of what they believed about the earthly Jesus, so that, like Jesus himself, these first truths could be transformed through resurrection. It is exactly such transformation which is symbolized in this weekend's gospel story, where brash skepticism yields to unrestrained belief. Ironically, it is St. Thomas dubbed "the doubter" who eventually makes the most explicit profession of faith recorded in the gospel.

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion

Mass Intentions for the Week

Tues.	**April 18**	**11:00AM**
Ruperto de Rosario		Marcella de Leon
Wed.	**April 19**	**11:00AM**
Rosela Villanueva		Lily Militar
Thur.	**April 20**	**11:00AM**
Antonio Jacob †		Lacsina Family
Fri.	**April 21**	**11:00AM**
Thanksgiving		Jong & Alma Arcega
Sat.	**April 22**	**4:30PM**
Joseph Noe †		Stella
Sun.	**April 23**	**9:00AM**
Marina Alonzo †		Pena Family
Port Costa		**11:00AM**
People of the Parish		

† †††††††