

Reflection — the 2nd Sunday of Easter

By Fr. Jude Verley, osc

Back in the late 1980's I was invited to give a presentation on Catholicism at Anoka (Minnesota) High School. It seemed that for one week during the academic year, various religious leaders would be invited to a particular class to speak on their respective religion and to answer questions. At the time the Crosiers ministered at St. Stephen's Church in Anoka - the parish church for the city (I was associate pastor at the time).

As I entered the classroom, written on the white board was the statement

Doubt is not the opposite of faith. It is an aspect of faith!

How many of us would be surprised by such a statement? But it is true—yet even the statement surprised me—and has remained with me all of these years. I presume one of the religious leaders, in a class before me, wrote it on the board.

This Sunday is the 2nd Sunday of Easter and, as always, we have the story of "Doubting Thomas," the apostle who refused to believe that Jesus was resurrected until Thomas himself saw the nail marks and placed his finger in the side where the lance pierced Jesus' side.

The Gospel passage tells us that Thomas was called "The Twin!" A number of years ago, I read a scripture scholar ask the question "Who was 'The Twin' of Thomas?" The scholar went on to say WE ARE!—for we occasionally can *doubt* or *have doubts* about an aspect of our faith. Isn't that very human? How often do you and I have a doubt about something or other? But it doesn't mean we don't have faith, or we don't believe. At the end of Sunday's Gospel passage, Jesus says that we are blessed who do believe but have not seen. Religion—any religion—is a matter of faith in things we don't necessarily see or experience or understand. Having a doubt might be a *teachable moment* when we are called upon to reflect or pray or study or observe, etc. We grow in faith and we grow in belief. Hopefully each of our spiritual journeys on earth is a constant blossoming of faith and belief. We never have *our act completely together*. Therefore, let us be open to the surprises God has in store for us, as God surprised those disciples/friends of Jesus with, "He is not here. He has been raised!" And the resurrected Lord appeared! Alleluia!