

into this in an auxiliary capacity. This could very well be accomplished nationwide.

It is important to note that most people with disabilities and their families are people with great faith. They have come to rely on hope and trust in God in a much more realistic and routine way than most believers. As a result, most people with disabilities like to be part of a church community. In any given town, one of the few places that persons with disabilities share in common are their churches. Therefore churches are a prime avenue for bringing persons with disabilities together and have an obligation to help them meet one another and to help advocate on their behalf.

One final note is that despite the similarities in his methods, Jesus also very much treated each person as an individual and attended to their specific needs. Pastors therefore rather than thinking in terms of a parish being "handicapped accessible" might think instead of the specific needs and talents of the Ruth Marie's, Joe's, and Kathy's in their midst. We cannot simply designate a couple of special parking places with blue and white handicapped symbols and then sit back and say we are "accessible." The "parking space"

needs to exist not only in the parking lot, but also in the minds and hearts, programs and policy making, services and prayers of the entire parish. In this regard, dioceses ought to review their annual reports, which usually contain a question like: "Is your worship space, rectory, school, social center handicapped accessible?" This is a minimalist mindset that really serves to "dis-able" a more healthy perspective toward persons with disabilities. As a local, national, and international church, we need to help change cultural perspectives that isolate persons with disabilities and fail to utilize their skills. For as Jesus reminds us: "What we do for the least of our brothers and sisters, we do unto Him."

Rev. Andy Krangc writes from Sacred Heart Church, Huntington, WV.

**Churches are a prime avenue for bringing persons with disabilities together and have an obligation to help them meet one another and to help advocate on their behalf.**

*We did not weave the web of life. Whatever we do do it - we do to others and to ourselves.*

*--Anishinabe proverb*

## Call Me Didymus

DAREN J. ZEHLE

Early in the morning, Mary and the women went in their anguish and in their sorrow to the tomb in which he had been laid to rest. Upon arriving at the tomb they found the tomb empty, with the stone rolled away, the burial clothes neatly placed, and a young man dressed in white. "Why do you seek the living one among the dead?" he asked them. "He is not here, but he has been raised" (Lk 24:5-6). They listened to this messenger and they believed what he told them. Their anguish over the death of the one loved so dearly, the one in whom they looked to save them, turned to joy for they believed the words of this great messenger.

They then immediately left the tomb and ran to the Apostles and told them what had happened. The Apostles did not believe the women. We could have here nothing more than another time in history that men did not listen to women; but there is something more here. The Apostles did not believe the women, and who can blame them, really? The tale they told seemed impossible - nothing like this had ever happened before. Peter and John quickly ran to the tomb to see for themselves if what the women said was true. They saw and they left amazed.

Soon afterward, Jesus appeared to the Apostles in the locked room where they were hiding from the Jews. They rejoiced when they saw him, all but Thomas that is, who was not with them at the time. They later told Thomas what had happened and he simply could not believe their words. This was simply too unbelievable for him. The tale they told seemed impossible. Nothing like this had ever happened before. How could Jesus still be alive? Thomas

saw him crucified; he knew where they had buried him. Jesus had died; how could he have appeared to the Apostles? This was unfathomable, impossible, and incredible. And because of this, Thomas gets the unfortunate and true title, "Doubting Thomas," even though Matthew tells us, "When [the Apostles] saw [Jesus], they worshipped, but they doubted" (Mt 28:17). Thomas was not the only one who doubted, but that is not the point, or perhaps it is.

## Lukewarm

Thomas may not have believed, and yet he did not simply outright refuse to believe, either; he was still, at least, open to the truth. He said to the Apostles, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe" (Jn 20:25). If he could only see Jesus and touch him to be certain he was not seeing a mere specter, then would Thomas believe. Thomas needed verifiable proof, and he did not shy away from making this known; he was open to believe the words of the others, but he needed something more. Thomas was given an occasion to do just as he said he needed to do, only he did not put his fingers into the holes when the opportunity arose. Jesus appeared in the midst of the Apostles eight days after he first stood in their midst. This

time, Jesus said to Thomas, who was in the room with them, "Do not be unbelieving, but believe!" Thomas quickly exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" and, without inserting his fingers into the nail marks, or his hand into the side of Christ, he believed (Jn 20:28). Thomas believed the truth of the Resurrection without touching the Risen Lord; once he saw Jesus for himself he needed nothing more.

The other disciples, too, needed this encounter because they, like Thomas, also doubted. They, too, wanted to do just as Thomas had demanded, but they did not make known their desire, as did Thomas. The rest of the Twelve did not believe the testimony of the women for their story was too wondrous and inconceivable; they, too, wanted clear evidence and proof of this impossible account of the Resurrection. The Apostles, too, like Thomas, wanted to demand to put their fingers into his side, only they lacked the courage to declare such a strong and forceful desire. If we are honest, we will find that each of us wants to do the same as Thomas: we each desire tangible proof of the Resurrection; we each want to hold the Resurrected Lord with our own hands and to behold him with our own eyes.

Thomas was adamant in his declaration and he, quite simply, would not believe in the Resurrection until he saw what he wanted. Jesus could

have yelled at Thomas for not believing the words of the others or for not listening to the many times he had told them he must suffer and die to enter his glory; but he did not. Rather, Jesus invites Thomas to do just what he said he needed to do in order to believe. Jesus met Thomas where he was and offered to him what he needed. Thomas, however, no longer needed to carry out his previous demand; he saw the Risen Christ and confessed him as Lord and God.

## Twins like Thomas

What is, perhaps, most interesting of this whole account is how Thomas is named. He is called "Thomas, one of the Twelve, called Didymus" (Jn 20:24). We do not learn a great deal about Thomas from the four Gospels, even when they are combined together. We find Thomas listed in each Evangelist's list of the Twelve called by Jesus, and aside from this one fact, we learn precious little of him. We do, though, learn his title, "Didymus," which means, "Twin." We know that Thomas was one of the chosen Twelve and that he is a twin, but little else do we learn of him.

After the calling of the Apostles, we next encounter Thomas at the raising of Lazarus outside of Bethany. In this passage, Jesus receives word that, "the one you love is ill" (Jn 11:3). Jesus remains where

he received the message of Lazarus' illness until he says to the Twelve some days later, "Lazarus has died. And I am glad for you that I was not there, that you might believe. Let us go to him" (Jn 11:14-15). Jesus makes clear that the death of Lazarus occurred so that Thomas and the other Twelve "may believe," an irony that would not be brought to light until after the Resurrection. Thomas, referred to here as "Didymus," just as in the locked room, may actually – if only for a brief moment – understand the final mission of Jesus. Thomas may have experienced here a glimpse of the mission of Christ Jesus, a mission that he would soon come to forget.

After the orders to leave for Bethany, Thomas "said to his fellow disciples, 'Let us also go to die with him,'" believing that a return to the area of Jerusalem would certainly end with the death of Jesus (Jn 11:16). Just a few days prior to their departure, the disciples cautioned Jesus, "Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you, and you want to go back there?" (Jn 11:8). Indeed, he did wish to return, that they might believe and come to understand all that the Messiah must do. Thomas here encourages the others to hasten with Jesus to their death, whereas later on he would lock himself up in the room with the others for fear of his own death.

The title of Thomas may be the most intriguing aspect of him, but in

all of Scripture, never are we told who Thomas' twin is. We are simply told that he is a twin, which leads to the obvious question: who is the twin of Thomas? The answer is simple, really: each of us is the twin of Thomas. You are the twin of Thomas. I am the twin of Thomas. We are all Thomas' twins because each of us has been where Thomas was at one point or another in our life. We might each be called, "Didymus."

Thomas saw Jesus condemned, crucified, dead, and buried and he could not believe that the one he saw die was alive. He could not believe that Christ was raised even as he said. It was impossible, he thought. Who of us at one point or another has not doubted the Resurrection? The women had the young man in white to witness to the Resurrection; the Apostles had the women to witness to the Resurrection; Thomas had the word of the women and the Apostles to at least get him doubting the possibility of the Resurrection; we have the witness of the women, of the Apostles, of Thomas, and of the Neophytes to witness to the truth of the Resurrection.

### Given testimony

Thomas, though, did more than simply doubt the testimony of the others; he said to the Apostles, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail

marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." A statement like this suggests not only doubt, but also a deep anguish. Such a strong and powerful statement like this is not made unless the one who makes it is in a state of near despair. After witnessing the passion, the crucifixion, and the death of his teacher and master, the one in whom Thomas had placed all of his hope for the future, the one with whom Thomas had journeyed with for three years and whom he came to know and love, how could Thomas not be near despair and in immense spiritual and emotional anguish? The master, the teacher, the friend – the one in whom Thomas placed all of his trust and hope for the future – was gone; he was dead. Thomas could see no other hope, though the words of the Apostles led him to at least begin to doubt what they said. He did not outright refuse to accept it; rather, he doubted their words.

Granted, we were not present with the disciples to witness the brutality of the death of Jesus; we were not present to see him taken down from the Cross; we were not present to see him laid in the tomb. We have, however, felt abandoned by the Lord at one point or another, just as Thomas did, and we, like Thomas, know well that Jesus' "absence can be painful."<sup>1</sup> Who of us has not agonized when we thought the Lord was no longer present with us? In these times that we cannot see the pres-

ence of Christ in our lives we are most like Thomas. More likely than not, we try to bargain with the Lord, we beg or we demand a sign, and we become his twin.

Each of us has suffered great anguish, despair, or doubt over the death of a loved one; over an illness or a disease; over a war; or even over a statement of Jesus. We have all lived in piercing agony at one time or another because God seems to have abandoned us and left us on our own to see to our own devices. If there are some fortunate souls among us who have not yet suffered so, we can be sure that such times will come even as they came to each of the great saints; indeed, some are living in anguish this very day because they do not sense the presence of Christ in their lives. In times such as these we must be confident that, like Thomas, Christ will come to us even in our anguish and we must stay with them, support them, encourage them, and pray for them until such time comes.

It is within this pain that the doubting of Thomas takes on an entirely different meaning. Within his torment, Thomas' doubt is, in a certain sense, commendable. Alfred Lord Tennyson, the poet laureate of Queen Victoria, wrote on the death of a close friend, "There lives more faith in honest doubt, believe me, than in half the creeds."<sup>2</sup> Doubt, even in anguish is admirable, to an extent, because it demonstrates the desire

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to believe, while at the same time demonstrating the inability to believe. It is a sign that all is, indeed, not lost, that the one in anguish and doubt has not given up or forthrightly refused to believe. When we doubt, part of us seeks the truth; we want to know, we want to believe, but for the time being we cannot believe, for whatever reason. It is not that we will not believe, but more so that we cannot. Things seem completely wrong and impossible. Thomas wanted to believe, but he could not yet believe.

In his anguish and in his doubt, Thomas saw Jesus in front of him and cried out, "My Lord and my God!" Thomas sought the Christ, whom he thought dead and gone, and Christ came to him in his anguish and doubt. Thomas saw then what he needed to see so that he might believe what the others had told him. Thomas did not, in the end, need to put his hands into Jesus' wounds; he saw, and that was enough for him to believe. Thomas now would testify to the Resurrection; his doubt and anguish had turned into the joy and peace of Easter and of the Resurrected Lord that he could not contain.

We are, in truth, the twin of Thomas when we find ourselves in doubt and anguish, for whatever reason, be it sickness, death, unemployment, old age, war, or any number of other situations. Like Thomas, though, we must not give up. We must continue seeking the Risen One not among the

dead but among the living. The power of the Resurrection has destroyed the power of doubt and anguish, the power of sin and death, and gives us the peace and joy of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Death is not the end. Sickness is not the end. Doubt is not the end. "Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again," we proclaim each Sunday as we continually witness to the truth of the Resurrection. The power of the grave could not contain him—he is alive! He is risen and is in our midst! He says to each of us, "Do not be unbelieving, but believe!" The Apostles did not condemn Thomas or throw him out of their number. Neither must we give up on those who doubt our testimony to the Resurrected One. We must stay with them and help them each day that they, with Thomas, may one day exclaim, "My lord and my God!"

#### Endnotes

- 1 *Hans Urs von Balthasar, Does Jesus Know Us? Do We Know Him. Translated by Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), 76.*
- 2 *Alfred Lord Tennyson, "In Memoriam" (pt. XCV, st. 3).*

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## Beyond Betrayal The Effects of Clergy Abuse

REV. ROBERT D. WHELLOCK, OFM CAP, D.MIN.

*This is a talk given at the 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Male Survivors, Minneapolis MN September 2003.*

I will speak mainly of abuse by Roman Catholic priests. I can only speak from the aspect of the abuse of boys, because that has been my experience. I have not made the abuse of girls a matter of sufficient study to speak on it. However, from the study I have done, I submit that much of what I write about as referring to male victims, would ring equally true for female victims of whatever age.

I came upon the book: *Betrayed As Boys* by Dr. Richard Gartner, Ph.D. This book was an instrument of healing and understanding for me. Dr. Gartner's title was a moment of

finally seeing why I hurt so much. A man I trusted betrayed me; a man who was everything I thought I would ever want to be as a man betrayed me. A man who had acted like a big brother to me betrayed me. Alan, the man who betrayed me, acted more like an older brother than as an assistant to my scoutmaster.

I sincerely believe that what I have grieved over for so many years, and what has caused me a long list of childhood sexual abuse effects, was that I felt so betrayed. I sincerely believe that what crushed my spirit so completely was the feeling of being betrayed by Alan.

Before a person can understand the reasons why men and women who were sexually abused by priests are so severely harmed in their spirit, I need to speak first, about who a priest is, how he is looked at by Ro-