

I want to talk a bit about St. Thomas, doubt and mercy. St. Thomas has a bit of a bad reputation over this what happened and his perceived doubt; but if we think about it, how many of us have doubts of our own? Have you ever had doubts about Jesus's love for us? Doubts about God's forgiveness? How about doubts whether or not we're being punished right now for any of the many transgressions we have done? I know I do. I believe that the disciples had more than a few doubts over what was happening also and were praying for some guidance. I can't tell you how many times over the past year I've asked God for some mercy for us, some reprieve from what is going on, some sign that there is something to look forward to. And I have to be honest, I have had more than my fair share of doubts over what I have felt was a "lackluster response" to my requests. I've never better understood and related to St. Thomas than I have the past year. I truly hope I'm not the only one that has felt this way.

Then I thought about what else we heard in the Gospel reading, the first words Jesus spoke after his resurrection. "Peace be with you". He said it twice on Easter and then again today; but you know what is interesting, it wasn't something He said before his suffering and death. Why is that? Why did He not give his followers that peace before...during a time when they most needed it?

It's because the peace of Christ has a price, and that price was His Passion. That Passion is also the price of our peace. You see, we are a fallen people and we tend to look for peace in material things, in comfort, in bank accounts or in expensive hobbies. But something interesting has happened to most people that I've talked to over this past year, the things they miss are not material things, they are things such as being around others, meeting with friends, feeling like they have a purpose in life, coming to mass and feeling safe in their communities. I truly haven't heard anything about excessive material things. These struggles may have helped us put things in perspective. This has been a painful time, but it is the suffering we are going through now that is helping us better see and feel God's mercy in action.

As I continued to think about St. Thomas, his doubts and the "lack of mercy" I incorrectly felt we have been receiving, I came to the realization that God's mercy has been around us the whole time. Christ has been with us this whole time. I look and see God's mercy in the work that so many have done. I feel God's mercy in all of you every time I come to church. I've had the doubts over all this time and I'm not so arrogant as to believe that I may not have doubts in the future, but thanks to all of you and many like you, I have felt God's mercy and have some hope.

Saint Teresa of Calcutta once said "I know that God will never give me more than I can handle, I just wish he didn't have so much faith in me." You all need to know that God has faith in you, He has faith in all of us. I have faith in all of you and if we have faith in God and each other, things will continue to improve and we will better see and feel God's mercy.

So, I wanted you to all know that...I also want you all to know that just as the disciples of Christ went out and spread good news after suffering, we must do the same. We must turn this doubt, this anger, this apathy that we've gotten from our suffering around and reflect on God's mercy and the blessings we have received.

You are all a blessing to me and I know that I speak for Fr. John when I say that you are blessing to him also. Continue to be strong for each other, we're in good company. Jesus suffered for God's mercy, the disciples suffered and felt God's mercy and then went on to change the world with their faith. Now it's our turn. I used to say that God has this but now I say we have got this...with God; and I want you to know that there is no one else I would rather have this with than God and all of you.