

Is there any human relationship that exists without doubt?

Even the most secure, balanced relationships contain some degree of doubt.

It's an unfortunate part of what it means to be human.

And perhaps it is the most devastating.

The other plagues common to human existence are bearable—sickness, grief, sorrow...these things can be managed, if not cured. With the proper diet, exercise, perhaps medication and adequate sleep, most things that are tormenting in life can be kept at bay.

But not doubt.

Doubt is a consuming darkness, one that creeps into the brain silently and doesn't stop until it completely devours it. Doubt takes everything you know to be true and turns it into everything you thought to be true...it changes the absolute into the possible...it changes certainty to uncertainty...it exchanges security for insecurity.

Doubt is a mental cancer.

The disciple Thomas today is suffering from doubt, and while he is easy to single out, he is no different than any of us. It is after Easter, though, and he should be elated...after all, Jesus has just risen from the dead. Jesus has just crushed hell and death. Jesus has righted everything that Adam had wronged. The devil has been pushed into a tiny little, temporary corner. Creation is back in balance. It is a time for celebration, for

rejoicing!

Isn't it?

Yes, it is!

Jesus is risen from the dead, alleluia!

So then what in the world is Thomas' problem?

Party pooper.

No, Thomas isn't trying to be a downer...he'd love to celebrate, if only he could.

But some things you just can't fake. And you can't fake belief in something if you just don't believe it.

And so, try as he might, Thomas finally confesses, “You know, I want to believe all this...really, I do! But I just can't.” He is tormented by crippling doubts...and his doubts just compound his despair...you mean, nothing has changed? Even if Jesus is raised from the dead, why do I still feel this way? What's wrong with me? Everything is exactly the same as before...Easter has changed nothing!

Ever felt that way before? Ever felt like Thomas, that if Jesus has really done all the things we believe he's done, why is there still sickness and poverty and war and depression and loneliness? What's changed from before Easter? Nothing, apparently.

But remember that the reality of Easter doesn't depend on us feeling it...and it doesn't even depend on our believing it...God wants us to feel joyful and God wants us to believe that Jesus is raised from the dead. But ultimately, God did all these things

because he loves us and because he understands the depths of his love for us, even if we don't get it.

It's the same reason a parent tells an infant, "I love you." The infant doesn't understand those words. But the parent doesn't stop saying them because the baby doesn't understand; no, the parent understands that the baby one day will understand...the parent says, "I love you," because the parent can't help it!

God can't help loving us, even though we doubt. God will love us through our dark nights of doubt and knows one day we will understand the profound miracle of Easter. We might not get it today or tomorrow or next year or ever...but God still gives us his amazing, unconditional love, repeating it over and over, and as we grow in faith, as we open our eyes and as we take our first steps, God's love will unfold and bloom in our hearts, slowly, patiently, beautifully.

Take heart, Thomas, God holds your turbulent heart in his hands and will never let it go.