

Saint Thomas and Saint Thomas of the Air Church
 Sunday after Easter
 April 27, 2025
 rmceely+

*as my Father hath sent Me,
 even so
 send I
 You.*

In his first person account, St John returns us to Jerusalem
 To a closed room,
 In which the 10 Apostles huddle.
 Thomas was not with them that night
 And Judas had hanged himself in regret.

It was Sunday evening.
 Their friend had been murdered on Friday.
 All but John had fled and deserted Him.
 Even Peter had denied Him at His trial.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had begged Pilate for His
 body.
 He had been buried in the tomb
 and sealed behind a great stone.
 All had seemed lost.

But the Holy Women had been to the sepulcher
 And the body of Jesus was no longer there.
 Peter and John had gone there and confirmed it.
 But what of the Angels?
 Then Mary of Magdela reported that she had seen Him that
 morning.
 Had even spoken to Him.
 All was not as it seemed.

They had murdered Jesus,
 They had identified Peter.

Were the Jews and the Romans coming for them too?
And so, they gathered in the protection of that closed room.

Suddenly,
 Without warning or fanfare
 He was there
 Standing among them.

Given what they had done,
 They might have anticipated a less friendly greeting
 But He said: “peace be unto you”.

We cannot imagine their elation.
 All that He had told them was true.
 Everything happened as He had said.
 Their Hope restored.

Then two things happened that would change their lives.
 Just as God had breathed life into Adam at Creation;
 He breathed new life unto them.
 And they received the Holy Ghost.

And He gave them two admonitions:
 As my Father hath sent me, even so, send I you.
 Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them
 And whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.

The reformers end today’s Gospel here.
But let’s go further into St John’s account.
John tells us that our own St Thomas
 Was inexplicably not present.
 When he was informed, he could not believe
 And famously declared that he would only believe if he
 Placed his fingers in the crucifixion wounds.

Well that opportunity arrived the following week.

As John tells us,
 They were again in a closed room
 Jesus appeared as He had previously

He offered his wounds to Thomas.
 But rather than thrust his hands into the wounds
 Thomas fell to his knees, and said:
 “My Lord and my God”.
 (something some say even today at the elevation of the Body
 and Blood of Christ in the Communion service).
 Thomas doubted no more.

Let us look more closely at what had just happened on those two
 occasions in that closed room in Jerusalem;
 Because it would change the World.

11 men. Ordinary men.
 All called by Jesus.
 By the breath of the Son of God,
 They were instilled with the Holy Ghost.
 The spirit, the third Godhead.
 They were reborn.
 With new power of God.
 New drive
 New energy (we might say today) to accomplish the Mission.
 They were newly formed, newly re-ordered,
 Or “ordained” to the will of God
 With a mighty task to fulfill.

Jesus gave them their orders:
 As my Father sent me so send I you.
 Then He gave them authority to remit sins through Him.
 They were the new priests of what would later be called
 Christianity.

They went to work. O did they go to work.

The Resurrection had taken place at the Passover
 When a large number of people

Historians estimate a million or more
 Were in Jerusalem.
 When they returned to their homes,
 They took with them the story of Jesus and the Resurrection.
 The Gospel grew and exploded across the Holy Land.
 The Apostles split up and planted Christianity
 Throughout Syria, Egypt, Palestine, Ethiopia
 Throughout Asia Minor, Greece, Rome
 To Persia and India
 To Europe
 And later to the new world, Australia, New Zealand.
 The South Pacific.

It would later be known as the Easter Effect.
 It spread across the Globe.
 As the yeast nourishes the bread dough
 With the message and the Love of God,
 The Easter Effect
 Transformed societies throughout the world.
 Even here in this secular desert of San Francisco
 The Easter Effect has taken hold.
 This little miracle Church of God's Love.

*As my Father hath sent me
 Even so send I you.*

Words spoken directly to His Apostles.
 But did Jesus speak to us as well?
 All those centuries and thousands of miles ago?

Against all odds
 Against the dire predictions of our detractors
 Against the forces and principalities in high places
 Against the evil of our world.
 Here we are

Gathered not in a closed room
But in the House of God,
 Blessed with this building
 And some of God's best creations,
 You.

Without legal impediment.
In this city named for one of His Saints
 In a church named for none other than St Thomas,
 On a street named for His Sacraments.

What is our charge?
As His Father sent Him
 So sends He
 us.

Are we to continue to worship Him each week?
 Each day?
 We have the sacraments, the liturgy and the Spirit.
 We have a prayer life.
What are we doing with them?

Within these walls
 You are well formed and perfect Christians.
 Does it survive as you walk through these doors
 Where it becomes much more difficult?

Many believe that it was St Francis of Assisi who counseled
 “Preach the Gospel always
 and when necessary
 use words”
Francis lived his faith
 In a way that was a beacon for others.
We too, can be that beacon.

Each decision we make
 Each step we take
 That is consistent with our Christian beliefs
 Is a shining example to those who know us
 A demonstration in physical form
 Of the moral character of Christianity.

At the same time, each decision we make and each step we take
 That is inconsistent with Christianity
 Is a glaring skyrocket of hypocrisy.
 Nothing is more off-putting than a hypocritical self-righteous
 Self professed Christian.

However, quietly living our lives in conformity with Christ
 Is not the entire answer to our calling.
 Certainly it is part of our calling
 And the words attributed to Francis are a warm comfort
 To those who shy away from speaking out.
 But speak we must.

When the opportunity presents itself
 We are called to speak the Gospel.
 Defend the truth of the Gospel.
 It is not always easy and on rare occasions it can be uncomfortable.
 It is the other side of the coin that Francis presents.
 When necessary, use words.

*As my Father hath sent me
 Even so
 Send I
 You.*

