Low2023

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**:

Some may wonder why this Sunday is nicknamed: “Low”. Certainly in Eastertide we particularly do not want anyone to be depressed!

Scholars disagree whether it reflects the lesser importance of this first Sunday after Easter relative to last Sunday. Others say it is a corruption of the Latin in our introit at a Eucharist, *laudes*, “let us laud [merrily]”. Until 1970 it was officially known in the Roman Church, no doubt of trivia interest to fans of the hunchback of Notre Dame, as “*quasi modo*” Sunday. These two Latin words are the first words of our introit in **Latin** and mean, “as if lately”...[newborn babes].

Today in the modern Roman Church it is “Divine Mercy” Sunday. In the Eastern Church today is Easter. They call today and the next week the "Pasch", or “bright” week. They view these eight days actually as one big happy day. I like that.

*“[that same evening]...when the doors were shut where the disciples were...for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in [their]...midst.”*

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I guess there is one more thing you might now be wondering about. How is that Jesus just appeared that first Easter evening seemingly out of nowhere? We should note Luke and John detail this assembly that first Easter evening. Mark offers a very cursory account. John is the one who adds that Thomas was NOT present with them. It seems that he had separated himself from the group after the crucifixion, at least for a while, maybe ten days.

It had been quite a day! Mary and other women disciples had gone to the tomb at the crack of dawn and learned that Jesus body was gone. Mary at least had run to tell Peter and John. They then had run back to confirm. At least one of them, John, had come to the conclusion then and there that Jesus had to be alive since hurried grave robbers would not have left a tidy tomb. Then, not long before our Gospel passage, Cleopas and another disciple had returned from Emmaus claiming that had both seen and spoken to the Lord.

Yet, the disciples at that meeting were not happy campers. They were scared. They huddled behind their bolted doors. They were afraid of the Jews. Why? For one thing, the news of the day now would make them hunted men since the lie was spreading that they had stolen Jesus' body.

Knowing how anxious the Temple leaders had been about making sure Jesus stayed dead and did not get rescued the leaders no doubt sent their own contingent that morning to make sure that “all was well” at the “deceiver's” tomb. They would have been shocked and angry at what they saw. Their worst fears now were realized!

This “de-ceiver”, Jesus, actually, really had disappeared! Despite all their planning and all their precautions, Jesus body was gone without a trace. They, as we, would have called for an intensive search of the whole area, even of the city, especially where they thought a friend of Jesus might live and could hide the body. They would have, “combed the desert”, so to speak. And so, as St. Matthew recounts, they then specifically started the lie that Jesus' followers had outsmarted them and stolen his body away.

St. Mark in his Gospel account, which would have come from Peter's preaching, adds something poignant not in John's recounting about the disciples fear that evening as they huddled.. Mark adds that when Jesus appeared he **“upbraided**” his disciples for their cowardice.

Jesus scolded them. St. Luke adds to John's story that Jesus then made a point of eating food, some fish and a honeycomb, his first food since the Last Supper, to show that he was not just a vision or spirit, but flesh and blood. Then eight days later Thomas was with them when Jesus reappeared and had Thomas poke him in his side to test his wounds.

Thomas, called Didymus or the Twin, was of the "seeing is believing" sort. He then might be an apt Patron saint for modern America since many only trust their senses, especially sight. But, as Jesus told him, Thomas "blessed are those that have NOT seen and yet believe". Thus faith is the supreme act of the intellect, something many people today would not...believe.

Yet, this doubter, this "proof is in the pudding" Apostle, was the first to make the connection between Jesus and God. After the Resurrection, Mary Magdalene called Jesus master, while others didn't know what to say. St. Thomas however came right out and said: "my Lord and my God". This is an acclamation traditionally incorporated into the liturgy and made when the Consecrated host and then Consecrated wine are elevated before the congregation.

Thomas later went on to preach the Gospel in Mesopotamia. There is some Patristic literature saying that he died "east of Persia", or Iran. The long legend has been that he was martyred in Madras in Southeastern India which definitely is East of Persia. His relics were definitely once in Edessa in Turkey, but were translated to Chios on the coast of Turkey about 1258 and are claimed to be in Ortona on the Adriatic, in Italy.

Still, as flesh and blood, how did Jesus get in then? Scholars have noted that as the Son of God Jesus entered the world like every other baby boy, yet his mother somehow remained a virgin. And, after his resurrection Jesus remained human and divine.

His resurrected body, while still flesh and blood, was no longer subject to that which hurts it before death, all the many impacts of... time and space. An **eternal** body has no need of and is not effected by **time**. With heaven its home, which mortal hands and minds can not measure nor comprehend, a body has no need of and is not impacted by **space** either.

We see this phenomenon throughout the post resurrection accounts of Jesus. He just suddenly appears, as if, in science fiction, someone steps into a transporter or through a time portal. Without being limited by time and space, Jesus after his resurrection can be everywhere at what we call... the same time. As his beaten body taught what all Christians who seek to carry his cross in this life must **endure**, his body **after** death teaches what we can expect at the end of time when our souls and bodies are rejoined at the end of time. Matter and time will have no impact on us then. Amen.  ***+***