

# ST. THOMAS

## THE LESSON: JOHN 20

St. Thomas the Apostle was an impulsive man and a bit of a pessimist. As a disciple of Jesus he was what we might call “all in”, but this didn’t stop him from experiencing doubt and asking questions.

On one occasion, as the disciples were travelling, St. Thomas was noted to have said, “Let us also go, that we may die with him” (John 11:16). When it came to the arrest and crucifixion of his Lord, however, St. Thomas ran away with the others. On another occasion, when Jesus had begun to explain that he would be going away to prepare a place for his followers, St. Thomas was the one who piped up and said, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” (John 14:5). The most famous record we have of St. Thomas, however, is the one we’ll look at today – the one that earned him the nickname “Doubting Thomas”.

As we read the text, keep in mind that after this encounter happened, St. Thomas went on to preach the Gospel in Asia, and is believed to have been martyred by the thrust of a spear in India. Those of us who share some of St. Thomas’ less admirable qualities can be encouraged by the patient grace that Jesus extended to him, and the example that St. Thomas went on to set for us in faith and devotion.

## AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

In what ways do you identify with St. Thomas? What are your own weaknesses, doubts and struggles? Bring those things to God, and ask him to help you overcome them. Say, in the words of the disciples, “*Increase my faith!*” (Luke 17:5) Next, give some thought to how your doubt or faith may affect your witness to others. Ask God to make you always “*prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you*” (1 Peter 3:15).

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through the following collect.

*Almighty and everliving God, who for the more confirmation of the faith didst suffer thy holy Apostle Thomas to be doubtful in thy Son’s resurrection: Grant us so perfectly, and without all doubt, to believe in thy Son Jesus Christ, that our faith in thy sight may never be reprov’d. Hear us, O Lord, through the same Jesus Christ, to whom, with thee and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, now and for evermore. Amen.*

(COLLECT FOR THE FEAST OF ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE, P. 262)

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## JOHN 20: **FROM DOUBT TO DEVOTION**

<sup>24</sup>Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”

<sup>26</sup>Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” <sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.”

<sup>28</sup>Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” <sup>29</sup>Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”