

Easter 2, Year A, 19.04.2020, 11.15am

I wonder, do you always believe people when they tell you something?

- Before our grandson, who is now in Year 2, started school
 - We used to wonder what it would be like for his teachers to have to teach him
 - He never seemed to believe what we told him
 - He'd ask us about something
 - We'd give him an answer
 - And then he would say:
 - No, it's not like that
 - So often when we tried to explain something to him
 - He would not believe what we were telling him
 - He would argue his case

I wonder:

- Do you ever do that?
- Do you argue with people when they try to explain something?
 - Or do you always believe what people tell you?

Being like Adam does have advantages:

- These days he is very good at being able to tell whether someone is telling him the truth or spinning him some tall tale.
 - He is not easily fooled, that one.

I wonder if Thomas was a bit like our Adam:

- Someone who doesn't take things on face value
- Who questions and examines what they are told
 - Who is usually very good at telling the difference between a serious story and shaggy dog story.

Thomas has quite a bad rap really.

- His name has come to mean a 'doubter'
- If you call someone a 'Thomas', you're saying that they are overly cautious, not willing to take risks, a bit cynical
 - Not willing to believe that something is true
 - Or that it will work
 - It means that you are willing to let your doubts dictate what you do

It is as if people feel that Thomas should have behaved differently.

How would you have behaved if you had been in Thomas' place:

- His friend had died
- His other friends meet without him one evening
 - Afterwards, they tell him that they have seen their friend
 - The one who is dead.
 - Except they say he is not dead anymore!
 - He is alive again!

Just imagine that your Thomas

- Your friends have just come in
 - And told you this incredible news:
 - That they have seen your friend,
 - The one who is dead

Would you believe them?

- Do I see people nodding there?

If I am really honest,

- I'm not sure if I would have believed them
- I think I might have reacted in the same way as Thomas
 - I think I might have asked for evidence

Usually,

- I think it is good to want evidence
 - There is a lot of fake news about, these days
 - Especially on Social Media
 - It is good to question
 - It is good to use our minds / our heads
 - And not just accept everything we see or read or are told
- It can be good to do a bit of research
 - See if we can trust the information that we are given

Sometimes,

- It is not possible to get firm proof
- Sometimes we have to take a bit of a leap of faith
 - Not in an irresponsible way
 - Not about not using our brains
 - But perhaps it is about dispensing with our unbelief for a bit

When it comes to believing in God

- Or believing that Jesus came back to life:
 - We cannot prove that in the same way as we can prove that the chair that we sit on exists or the house that we live in

When it comes to deciding whether or not God exists:

- We have to listen to the people who tell us about God
- All those people who have gone before us, who believed in God and who have written about God or sung about God or talked about God
 - We should still question the evidence
 - Not take everything at face value
 - But we should also be willing to take a bit of a leap of faith
 - Because we will never conclusively prove that God is real.

As well as listening to other people's stories

- You may be able to see evidence of God's existence in the world around you
- In the things that people do

Have you ever seen wind?

- May be you think you have
 - But it is not really possible to see wind
 - All we can see is the effect that the wind has on the things around us:
 - We can see leaves and trees move in the wind
 - We can see clothes on the clothesline move in the wind

- We can feel the wind on our face
 - But we can't really see the wind

God is a bit like the wind:

- We can't see God
 - But we can see the effect that God has on other people and on the world around us

Thomas was lucky:

- He found it hard to believe what his friends had told him
- And he got the chance to see for himself
 - He was able to meet Jesus, to see him and he could even have touched Jesus' wounds

It's not the same for us

- We won't be able to do what Thomas did
 - But we can listen to what people tell us about God
 - We can look for God in the world around us
 - and in the people around us
 - and that can show us that God is real
 - that Jesus really came back from the dead
 - that God's love is stronger than anything, even death!

Amen.