



## My Lord and my God

An address for the Cosmic Mass ● 20<sup>th</sup> April 2008 ● Rev Kate

*On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe." Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you." 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 be faithless, but believing." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."*

*John 20: 19-29*

Today I want to draw your attention to this encounter with Thomas. We know some things about Thomas, for he is mentioned twice in the Gospels, and these encounters can help us build up a picture of him and get to know some of his characteristics and maybe explore what motivated him in the meeting of which we have just heard.

The first mention is in John 11:16. Lazarus has died and they are discussing going down to Bethany in Judea. They all know that it is very likely that the Temple soldiers are out to take Jesus when he next appears. So when he says he is going, Thomas says to the other disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

During our time together at the weekend retreat on Faith, one of the things that we tried to clarify for ourselves was when is it that we are acting out of our astral nature and when are we acting out of our IAMness. That is, is it an impulse from Christ and a life-changing moment or is it a fleeting moment from our ego?

We can't get into Thomas's shoes, but we can hear what he says and see some qualities that are his. He is quite passionate and courageous, he speaks out of devotion and love for his master, he encourages the others to go up and die with Jesus. So we could ask here: Was this a life-changing moment or is it a strong emotional response? The important thing to know is that those qualities are there and they are important qualities - devotion, love, courage and a passion in his discipleship. He certainly had a level of faith in Jesus, which would be tested.

The second time we hear from him, Jesus is comforting his Apostles in John 14:

*"Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him."  
John 14: 1-7*

Now it is important to know Thomas, because he is not just a character in the Gospels but he is in us. He is a spiritual power in you and me, the mind power of understanding. In this passage, we hear his cry to understand what on earth Jesus is talking about. We hear his anxiety too. He wants to go with Jesus. He wants to follow him. He needs to know. He does not pretend to know what Jesus is talking about. He wants to use his intelligence. So this is a good moment, don't you think - a moment of reality.

Thomas is trying to understand what is real for him in his life and relationship with Christ. And this questioning draws the wonderful truth from Christ, "I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life." Just think. If we didn't have doubting Thomas, we might not have had those words, which come like a flash of light. into that dark moment.

He is quite a leader too. Here, as in the first account, he speaks for his fellow disciples: **we** don't know. So what happened to all these good qualities? What happened to the man who wanted to go up to Judea to die with Jesus? Does he remind you of Peter? He was going to die for him too. What did Thomas believe in, in Jesus? As yet something had not come alive in the disciples, even though they had Christ with them. In hindsight, we know that the gift of the Spirit would bring the life that was missing.

When you read the account, there is so much unbelief, even when his friends had told Thomas that they had seen Jesus. It is in the Resurrection that we realise how important the gift of Faith is. There are such varying beliefs about the Resurrection, even amongst clergy of the various denominations. Sometimes, when I hear them, I wonder are they working from the same text as me.

Thomas and Peter went up to die with Jesus. We know they had amazing qualities that Christ could use, but their faith failed them. These qualities were turned towards their earthly wellbeing.

I think that there is another thing to think about, and that is death itself. It would have been so hard to believe that a person could be alive after he had been crucified. I think we hear that in Thomas's passionate unbelief: "I will not believe till I put my fingers in the place of the nails and my hand in his side." How can this man be alive? When Ahriman entered our beings in Atlantis death came into the world. Humankind lived with a death consciousness. We battle with it all the time.

What does it mean when we sing about Christ conquering death? Because we still die. What Christ did was such a wonder, an unbelievable thing. He overcame that

death consciousness. He gave us the power to live in a different consciousness, where life and light are the focus. He entered into us and is truly the way, the truth and the life.

To conquer death Jesus had to live as fully as he could every moment of his life. It began with the helpless babe in the manger and from that time every moment was unknown. After the Baptism when Christ entered into him, Christ, the all-knowing, had to live through the thinking and feeling and willing of Jesus and gradually transform his consciousness. And the thought that follows from this is that he has to do it now in us.

We are always moving into the unknown and we do it with degrees of consciousness. Sometimes it is with a very high degree of consciousness. I am thinking now about Peter and Marja and the preparation for and the time of their ordination. I'm sure I can speak for them when I say that it must have been a time of heightened consciousness.

In his seminar on the Easter mysteries, Mario talked about Jesus receiving the full rays of the Spiritual Sun, and that we have received one ray of the Sun power. I think that is a beautiful image that helps us understand why it is so difficult to live every moment with that kind of intensity.

You may all have a memory of some passionate moment, when you were fully alive to the power of the Sun God within you and your faith was indomitable and alive and there was no turning back. I think those moments are mostly challenging and sometimes painful moments, when we have allowed Christ to work through us. Mario tells us that they are rare moments, for our I AMness is only in seed form, rather like that child in the manger. It is easy and seductive to believe that an emotional moment is an I AM moment. Treasure the memories of those moments, for they changed us and will encourage us to keep on changing.

Christ was present to Thomas in his etheric body, but Thomas could not see him. However Thomas had great qualities and he had been practising. All those moments of love and loyalty and courage and his endeavours to understand this relationship, paid off.

When he was able to see Christ, of course he had no need to put his hands in the wounds. He understood who Christ was, and who he was. He just dropped to his knees with that beautiful prayer of faith, "My Lord and my God."

In the little book *Becoming*, which is an exciting book about the mind powers, we read this paragraph:

*The activity of proving what is real, and finally coming to know for oneself, is followed by reverence. This involves coming to oneself in all humility, and realising one's true identity and role. What was external for Thomas had now become part and parcel of his being. The same can apply to us. Our attitudes, our emotional life, our aspirations, and our actions are all affected.*

There is also a profound understanding that draws together both heart and mind in an inextricable bond. This integration of heart and mind does away with conflicts being waged between our thoughts, our beliefs, our ideals, our emotions and our

feelings. There is the reconciliation of opposites. If we develop our understanding, we sustain the vision of us standing before Christ in love as a co-worker.

We sing Thomas's affirmation of faith and love at every Mass. "Dominus meus" which means "My Lord", "et deus meus" which means "and my God". Let us be very present at this moment in our Mass today. There is a lovely line in a medieval carol which goes like this: "The knees of my heart do I bow, do I bow." It describes the inner attitude of our heart, so let us sing the "Dominus meus" from the heart. Let us see ourselves before him, and experience his love and forgiveness as Thomas did.

So shall it be

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