

Flis Banks, Reader  
Christ Church West Wimbledon  
Sermon :  
April 29, 2019 ~ “Doubting Thomas”

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**John 20:19-end & Acts 5:27-32.**

I hope that you all had a lovely Easter holiday, full of joy, excitement and chocolate. I did, and am still enjoying the feeling of it.

Well, now the holiday is over. The new School term has started, and most people are back at work. In our household, and I suspect quite a lot of others, there is the difficult question of how to deal with all the surplus chocolate, without everyone suffering from severe sugar overload. But in terms of the Christian Calendar, it is still very much the Easter season. The Easter garden is still looking magnificent, as are the altar lilies and the other flowers around the church. Even when they fade, we will still be celebrating the risen Christ, right up until Ascension Day, just over a month away.

And the readings for today, and going forward during this season, are full of the wonder and surprize of Easter. First comes the growing recognition among the Disciples that an extraordinary and wonderful thing has happened. The realisation is not immediate or uniform in the way it happens. Thomas, for example, and perhaps not surprisingly, just can't believe this strange tale. It is not until he has seen and touched the risen Christ that the belief and recognition just bursts out of him in that great cry “My Lord and my God”.

The joy and energy that that realisation brings, sets the apostles well on their path, starting the huge task of spreading the good news everywhere they can – even in the temple itself, as our first reading shows. It's not surprising that this was irritating to the Chief Priest and his council. He'd already imprisoned them once, but an angel had set them free to go straight back to the temple and start again. And now, in today's reading, they are arrested again and brought before the Council for trial, only for Peter to carry on doing exactly the same kind of proclamation inside the Council meeting itself. "We can't obey you rather than God" he says "God raised Jesus, who you killed, and exalted Him as our Leader and Saviour, that He might give repentance and forgiveness. We are witnesses to these things and are supported by the Holy Spirit as well". A brilliant summary of their message, for all the most important people in the Jewish hierarchy. These apostles just can't be stopped.

It's important for us to hang on to the joy, amazement and enthusiasm. Don't let it die with the Easter holiday, but go on remembering how extraordinary it is that God came to earth in the form of His son Jesus Christ, died for our sins, but was raised from the dead to be with us, forever our redeemer and our friend. As Jesus said, blessed are we, who have not been able to see the risen Christ in the flesh, but still believe. What a miracle.

Alleluia, He is risen.