



Thomas' Journey

Thomas appears three times in St. John's Gospel and always at a dramatic moment. In one instance, Jesus was threatened by his enemies in Jerusalem. In another, Jesus announced the death of his friend Lazarus who lived in Bethany, close to Jerusalem.

He said to them: *Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him* (Jn 11:14-15). Thomas dared to say: *Let us go also, that we may die with him* (Jn 11:16). Though he did not completely understand, he knew that Jesus was an extraordinary person who was filled with the power of God.

Thomas appeared a second time at another important moment in St. John's Gospel. After the Last Supper as Jesus was speaking with his disciples, Thomas asked him the following question: *"Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"* And Jesus answered: *I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also* (Jn 14:5-7). Thomas' question led to further clarification of the mystery of Christ. Not only was Christ filled with the power of God, he alone could lead us to the Father.

A third time Thomas appears at a critical moment in the Gospel. He was absent on Easter evening when the Risen Lord appeared to his disciples. Thomas refused to believe them. It was as if he could not leave the horror of Good Friday behind, though he had seen with his own eyes how Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. He had heard Jesus proclaim: *I am the life*, but all this had been swept away by the tsunami of violence and death that swallowed up his Lord. He did not want to revisit anything. His dashed hopes were too painful. Then eight days later, Thomas again was with the other disciples. Why was he still there? Was it because he was so disoriented that he did not know where else to turn? Or was it because his faith refused to die? When the Risen Lord appeared, spoke to him, and showed him his wounds, something incredible happened to Thomas. He no longer doubted and expressed his faith very clearly: *My Lord and my God* (Jn 20:28). St. John's Gospel concludes with this declaration that still resonates today like an organ crescendo. It's up to us to incorporate these words into our lives since they bring us joy and hope that will sustain us on our life-long journey.

Georges Madore

Translated by Honore Kerwin Borrelli

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