

TRINITY NEWS

Visualization: the Survey Map for Everything- John 20:19-31

What we visualise is a survey map for everything. A blind person may visualise specks of the luminous, but they are soon extinguished by shadows.

What did the disciples see in the locked room in Jerusalem? Thomas came to see evidence. When someone is telling you about someone or something there is always a subjective element. We always see things as we see them, not as others see them. I am the subject of what I see and what I see relates to my *viewpoint*. There may also be an evidential component. If someone threatens to sue you, that is evidential. What you feel about it is subjective and may be unrelated to the evidence. All of those present saw Jesus in the room at Jerusalem. Only the reaction of Thomas is given. He wants evidence and he gets an offer of direct contact with the Body of evidence as well as what he can see. The offer is to align touch with sight. The strange part is that the actual touching of Jesus wounded side and hand is not recorded. We only get Thomas's reaction, which is subjective: "My Lord and my God!" Jesus had said, "Put your finger here and see my hands." His side had been pierced by a spear at the Cross "Reach out your hand and put it in my side." A wound in his side would leave an indentation. If Jesus had been standing in front of Thomas he would have had to reach around Jesus' waist and places his hand in and over the wound. This would block it at least partly out of his sight. One piece of the evidence is to "touch and see". The other piece may have been touch alone as we have observed. In any case we have no description of Thomas actually touching the hands of Jesus with his finger or even his side with his hand. Instead, we have an exclamation of absolute trust and faith. What did they all see and what did Thomas touch and see? Jesus had already transcended history so the evidence is not entirely factual in our sense of the word. Jesus is standing on the floor of the room, but it exists no longer except in this description. The risen Jesus is not a 'fact' as we know it but a perceived reality that is related to the descriptions of his historical life.

Perhaps that is why the writer emphasises both touch and sight. Faith hinges on reason. A door usually needs hinges or tracks to run along to open and shut. Faith needs reason to give it connections to visible realities. Without reason aligned to our other faculties we cannot fully identify

anything. What do we see and feel in this scene? We are all like Thomas, hoping to catch sight of some authentic vestiges of the historical Jesus in the Risen One in this room. Thomas voices the thoughts of all those in the room. He also voices our thoughts and our need to come to see Jesus. What evidence do you need to convince you that Jesus is “my Lord and my God”? Thomas expressed it in his way and what he said answers the original question for Thomas. *The problem for many is not the evidence but what to do with the evidence.* What does it really tell us about the messianic prophet from Nazareth? Thomas wanted to know whether the resurrection body of Jesus of Nazareth indicated what had really happened. He asked for evidence and they all got it in the resurrected one himself. We know what Thomas made of it. How did he then translate it into his lived-out faith in his own resurrection in following Christ into God?

We live in an evidence-based world that takes its lead from science. Anything subjective get trashed if it does not have a measured and provable base. The problem for us is that our core of meaning is both subjective and evidential. Belief-in-God ‘structures’ have concepts that imply faith, but faith is measurable in outcomes not in content. Every Christian has Thomas’ problems when we are confronted with the risen Christ. We are driven to look at the evidence as presented in the evidential strands in the Gospels. We have to make choices that will always have a subjective element. Faith, like God, is not provable nor can it be disproved, but without it we cannot ultimately enter into a dialogue with the person in the room. Understanding him in his risen identity requires what Kierkegaard called the leap of faith. That is, letting the mind go into freefall and yet having a carefully reasoned understanding as a safety net to satisfy our mind as well as our faith and trust that we will not fall endlessly.

I came to Easter this year with the vivid memory of a man only in early middle age who faced death under enormous pressure and never wavered in the slightest in his faith in the living God. It takes guts to do that and also a clear mind that understands the evidence and acknowledges it, and yet moves beyond it in faith and open trust in one’s own capacity to discern and hold the truth of our ultimate destiny. Thanks, you are unforgettable. I hope that I also have the courage and the faith and invincible trust in the lasting power of deep-mind identity given into our hands by the Risen One. When our turn comes may we face it as bravely as he did. Amen and Alleluia!

Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

Wednesday, April 15.

- Bible study, 10 a.m.
- Group discussion, 7:30 p.m., Parish office.

Thursday, April 16.

- Midweek Eucharist, 10:00 a.m., Chapel.


NEXT WEEK’S READINGS:

Acts 4:5-12

Psalm 98

1 John 1:1-2:2

Luke 24:36b-48



The parish Sunday
School would like to
thank

Ms. Mary Tan
for taking the lead in
procuring the
Easter eggs for last
week’s hunt.