

Opening Homily

The Responsorial Psalm proclaims, "They are happy whose life is blameless," yet one might ponder, who among us can claim such blamelessness? It is a challenging aspiration that beckons us not to the pride of perfection but to the humility of continuous growth.

Gospel Acclamation reminds us of Thomas, or, as we know him, doubting Thomas. And his doubts make him approachable, relatable, and human. Yet, his story is not one of scepticism but of yearning for a tangible connection with the Divine. "You believe because you see me," Jesus said, blessing those who believe without seeing. Thomas's journey mirrors our own—the search for belief amidst the shadows of doubt.

Doubts have a cleansing quality. Doubts help us break out of the prisons we jail ourselves, says Anglican theology Richard Holloway. Doubts are part of the faith journey; if we keep going, we can find answers. And then, possibly, we can call out together with the doubting Thomas, "my Lord and my God", as we touch upon God in our lives and communities.

Faith is often understood as boldness and steadfast belief in the impossible. But it soon becomes clear that life and the world are simultaneously a whole of uncertainty, insecurity, ambiguity, meaning, and meaninglessness. If we seek life without doubts, risks, uncertainty, and insecurity, we may not live because there is simply no such world. But in the face of this, instead of choosing not to believe, it is worth changing/transforming our understanding of faith.

The British Rabbi Jonathan Sacks says, "Faith is the courage to live with uncertainty."

Every action and commitment, including faith, involves some risk and uncertainty, but faith recognises these uncertainties and still chooses to believe rather than disbelieve.

What does this mean? When I encounter evil, violence, cynicism, and intolerance, I have the option to give up because I am not going to change anything anyway. But I can also consciously do the opposite and, in so doing, break the cycle of cynicism, intolerance and evil.

What would it look like, this courage for our Assembly or our religious life?

Thus, we gather here, united not by the absence of doubt but by the shared courage to believe amidst it. May our discussions and our shared faith journey be a testament to this courage as we embrace the uncertainties and opportunities of our time.

Jānis MELŅIKOVŠ sj