

Faith is a lifetime process

2nd Sunday of Easter (April 27):
(R3) John 20:19-31; (R1) Acts 4:32-35;
(R2) 1 John 5:1-6.

Sunday's Gospel speaks of the apostle Thomas. We often call him "doubting Thomas." But there was nothing insincere or phony about Thomas. Remember the story of the death of Lazarus. When he was mortally ill, his sisters, Mary and Martha, sent word to Jesus. They wanted him to come to their home and heal their brother. But they lived in Bethany. That was in Judea where some sought to stone Jesus and kill him.

Jesus' disciples pleaded with him not to respond to their friends' entreaties. But Mary and Martha needed Jesus, so he felt he must go to them. At this critical juncture, Thomas cried out, "Let us also go to die with him" (John 11:16).

Thomas really believed in Jesus and loved him. But the idea that anyone can rise from the dead was simply too much for him to grasp. When told of the resurrection of Jesus, Thomas said, "I'll never believe it without ... putting my finger into the nail marks and my hand into his side."

A young man told a couple of his friends of his troubled past. At 16 he fell in with the wrong crowd, lost his way for a while, and spent a year in a reformatory. When he was released, his intentions were good; but because of his past record, he could not find a job. He became desperate and decided to rob a local service station to get enough money to leave the state.

He stole his father's car and gun and just before closing time drove up to the service window of a gasoline station. He was about to demand all the money from the woman manager. But just then, he looked up and saw a sign at the station. It read: "God is our Security Guard — Always On The Job." That was all it took, he said. He knew he couldn't rob that place. Instead, he rushed home and prayed all night. He was determined to get his life straightened out. And with God's help he did.

Thomas wanted to believe, just as we want to believe. But until Christ



Father Albert Shamon

A word for Sunday

appeared to him in person, Thomas simply could not take that leap of faith in the Resurrection. Maybe that is where so many people are today. So here are a few suggestions.

First of all, we find Christ best by serving him. A Scottish minister discovered that the answer to his doubts was to grow beyond them. He found that the answer to his doubts was to live a life with God's people, doing God's work. Faith is self-validating — as you live it, it becomes a reality in your life.

Another point we need to see is that we don't come to faith all at once. It is a lifetime process. Jesus spoke of conversion as being "born again." Being "born again" is just what it implies. In our life of faith we start by being born spiritually and then we begin to grow. It is unrealistic to think we come to spiritual maturity overnight. We find Christ best by serving him. But we don't come to faith all at once. It is a lifetime process.

Finally, we are not rewarded at the end of the journey because of our faithfulness, but because of God's faithfulness. There will be many occasions in our spiritual journey when we will want to throw up our hands and quit. If it all depended upon our determination, that is exactly what would happen. But it doesn't depend on our determination, but upon God's promises. Just when we are ready to quit, God will come to us and show just enough of himself to maintain us on the journey.

Normally, we don't think of donkeys as being very smart, or very good looking. Yet in the story of Jesus, donkeys were very important. When Mary and Joseph were going

to Bethlehem for Jesus to be born, Mary rode a donkey. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, he rode a donkey.

One of the main messages of the Bible is that God can take things that people normally don't think of very highly — like donkeys — and put them to great use. For example, some of the people in the Bible whom God used didn't seem to be very promising either, like the doubting Thomas. Every person may have some gifts that you don't see. Yet God can do great things with them, as he did with Thomas, even if others may not see their good points.

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

Daily Readings

Monday, April 28

Acts 4:23-31; Psalms 2:1-9;
John 3:1-8

Tuesday, April 29

Acts 4:32-37; Psalms 93:1-2, 5;
John 3:7B-15

Wednesday, April 30

Acts 5:17-26; Psalms 34:2-9;
John 3:16-21

Thursday, May 1

Acts 5:27-33; Psalms 34:2, 9,
17-20; John 3:31-36

Friday, May 2

Acts 5:34-42; Psalms 27:1, 4,
13-14; John 6:1-15

Saturday, May 3

1 Corinthians 15:1-8;
Psalms 19:2-5; John 14:6-14

Announcements

ADOPTIONS: The Catholic Courier does not publish adoption advertising: To obtain a list of agencies that serve birth mothers and adoptive parents, call 585-529-9530. Agencies wishing to be included on this list may send information to the Catholic Courier.

Gutter Cleaning & Repair

Roofing repairs / Gutter cleaning etc. **TOP TO BOTTOM HOME IMPROVEMENTS.** Call 585-338-9865 Fully insured.

House Cleaning

SIMPLICITY CLEANING SERVICES: Jennifer Bennett, Phone 585-338-9865, Cell 585-748-6328. Let us sweep your worries away. Fully insured.

Moving & Hauling

K-D Moving & Storage, Inc.
Experience in office, household moving and deliveries.
"Big or Small, We do them All!"
473-6610/473-4357
23 Arlington St. Rochester NY 14607
NYDC199677

Save up to

80% on your prescription medications

www.unidrugs.com

OR CALL US AT

1-800-583-0960

Call 24 hours a day

Travel

JOIN OUR GROUP - **NOVA SCOTIA SEPTEMBER 3-13, 200.** Call for brochure 585-637-2119. **ALL SEASONS TRAVEL.**

Masonry

MASONRY REPAIRS ALL TYPES, brick & cement step repairs, basement walls & garage foundation repairs. 40 years experience. Al Meyvis Sr. 323-1007

Painting & Wallcovering

AL MEYVIS, JR.: In/Ex painting, basement walls repaired/new sump pumps installed, all type home repairs, yard maintenance and clean up. NYS certified Call 392-4435.

Advertise Your **GARAGE SALE!**
20 words for \$15
Call 585-529-9530 to place an ad

Help Wanted

St. Joseph's Home since 1886

ADMINISTRATOR / CEO

Mission based long term care provider seeks an Administrator / CEO for an 82-bed skilled nursing facility and affiliate foundation. Facility is located by the St. Lawrence River, access to Canada, Thousand Islands and Adirondack Mountains. Will be responsible for working with a team in overseeing the construction of a 70,000 sq. ft. facility to replace current building. Qualifications include New York State Nursing Home License, skill in analyzing and interpreting financial data, excellent verbal and written communication skills, interpersonal skills and familiarity with fund raising. Salary commensurate with experience and includes a comprehensive benefits package. On site housing is available. Submit a letter of intent and resume to:

Search Committee

6866 State Highway 37

Ogdensburg, New York 13669

Fax: 315-393-2402

E-mail: cedirect@wadhams.edu

Milestones/Vocations

Publication date May 15, 2003