

I worked on a teen retreat recently and one of the kids on our team slipped me this note. It really tickled me. "Fr. Paul, Good Morning. I want you to know that life is a valuable commodity. For God created us in his own image, and he has a predetermined future for all of us. But we are just like a grain of sand in the endless Sahara desert compared to the Universe. God abounds throughout his beautiful creation. Remember that life is brittle and you must be gentle with the Temple that God has leased you. But you must say and act to what your conscience directs you towards because if you don't you'll look around and it will be too late! So live Frisky yet conservatively. Sound confusing? Too bad Fr., it's life."

Yes, life gets confusing. It seems like something is missing. Significant events happen, but we don't know what connects them. It's a jigsaw puzzle with pieces missing. I spoke to a kid recently who lived through a bad car accident. He knows this means something for his life, but he doesn't know what.

We're often in the predicament of St. Thomas, who missed the first appearance of Jesus in the upper room. He missed out on a vital experience and so he wonders, ~~where do I go from here? What will give me the assurance I need? how does this connect?~~

Many experiences in life create a vacuum: A strong member of the family dies and you wonder who will fill their shoes. Your spouse walks out the door and you wonder how you'll go on. A friend you thought you could rely on backs down on you.

And if that isn't enough, this weekend reminds us of another kind of vacuum. We're celebrating Earth Day. There are future generations we'll never see. What will those people need from us? How can we dispose our garbage and protect the environment in a way that will give life to the earth and peace to our descendants? *★* It's hard to get motivated to help people we'll never see.

John wrote the story of Thomas specifically for people with this problem: People who can't see all the pieces of the puzzle. He wrote this story down for the first people who believed in Jesus, but never saw him. His story says, "Look, Thomas was the same way. He missed seeing the risen Jesus. Who knows? If Jesus hadn't appeared again, Thomas may have walked away to become a garage mechanic or a rock star. But you are better than Thomas, because even though you have not seen, you still believe. Even if you don't have all the pieces, you keep going on as if you ~~do~~ *have enough*."

My brothers and sisters we have faith because people who never saw us passed it on to us. We have the earth because people who never saw us took care of it for us.

There's a story about two hunters who ran out of ammunition just as a huge bear appeared in front of them. One hunter reached for his knapsack and pulled out a pair of Nike Air running shoes. As he laced them on, his companion said, "What are you going to do with those? You'll never outrun that bear." The man said, "I don't have to outrun the bear. I just have to outrun you."

We can't do that. If life seems confusing, our care for one another will make the pieces fit. E2 Regis 21-22.iv.90

*★ Some people voted against curbside recycling because they don't want to bother separating glass from plastics from paper.*