

If the Missouri legislature ever decided we should adopt a patron saint for our state, I'd nominate Thomas the Apostle. He was the first to portray that attitude that characterizes so many of us in Missouri: Show me. "If you want me to believe in the resurrection," Thomas says, "show me."

Thomas has always been remembered as the one who doubted. In a way it's unfair, because Thomas was on hand for many stories of faith in the Gospel. It's like many of us--we make one stupid mistake and people never let us forget about it for the rest of our lives.

But in another way, it's good that we remember Thomas as a doubter, because we all become doubters. Doubt is like a bothersome neighbor who won't go away. Even when we want to be certain, doubt often lingers. It may taint our beliefs: Have you ever wondered, "Did Jesus rise bodily from the tomb?" "Did Mary remain a virgin throughout her life?" "Is there life after death for me?" Or doubt may riddle our daily lives. We wonder, like Thomas, "If Christ is truly risen, where is he? Where is he when there is no peace in my family? Where is he when my taxes went up when they were supposed to go down? Where is he in this divorce? Where is Christ when white supremacy wins a round in Arkansas and peace loses a round in the mideast? Show me. When I can see Christ, then I will truly believe."

Well, Christ is risen. If the empty tomb at Easter isn't convincing enough, the Gospel today practically stands on its head to tell us Jesus is back as he never was before--He walks in and out of locked rooms, he talks again, he knows what is in the hearts of his disciples. And finally, he invites one of them to touch him, to prove to himself it's not a mirage, but that Jesus is truly risen.

And do you notice where Jesus asks Thomas to touch him? He doesn't say, "Embrace me as your friend," nor "Kiss my feet as Magdalene did," nor "Kiss my cheek to undo what Judas did." No, Jesus says, "Thomas, touch my wounds. If you are to be the patron saint of Missouri, if you want me to show you I am truly risen, then touch my wounds. For it is in my suffering that I am present. It is precisely in your doubt that I am present. With families who argue, with the poor, with the lonely I am present. Touch my wounds, Thomas, my wounds."