

WEEKLY SERMON

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No Filter

There is a coffee shop near my house that is a particular favourite of mine as it is not a Costa or Starbucks, but a small local business. Not only that but they do great coffee and some great food too. The shop is called 'No Filter' which in my mind talks about coffee but also suggest that if you go in you'll get a blunt conversation with no filter! They are not like that of course but that phrase no filter is one that is often used to describe someone who says it like it is-or is blunt.

The gospel reading for this Sunday is taken from John's gospel and is the story of Thomas, the disciple of Jesus, often referred to as doubting Thomas. I always think Thomas gets a bad press as a disciple as the odd one out in the disciples, the sole doubter, the one who should have known better. In my view Thomas is like many of us and in fact shows us that even as flawed people Jesus will come to meet us where we are and help us to understand. He wasn't there when Jesus appeared to the disciples and when told he responds with a human response. He is impulsive and says what he thinks, says how it is. People don't come back from the horrific death that Jesus suffered. Perhaps he didn't dare believe it was true after the heartache of seeing Jesus die.

Perhaps he just said what was in his head with no filter. He gave a human response, that many people give today when told of the risen Jesus. However, the delight of the story is that Jesus so loved Thomas that he came to him. In all his flaws and humanity, his doubt and upset, Jesus met him where he was to reveal that he was indeed risen and indeed the messiah. As you read this passage in John, it is my hope that you will find comfort in the story of Thomas, knowing that when we get it wrong through doubt, fear or misunderstanding, Jesus will meet us where we are and reveal to us his majesty, compassion and love. There are times when we might doubt what we read in the bible and are not sure, or feel we need further convincing. But this passage reminds us that we only need to bring these uncertainties in prayer to God and He will fill our hearts. No filter!

Stephen Whittaker, Interim Diocesan Secretary