

Easter 2B. April 8, 2018, Dungeness Valley Lutheran, Sequim, WA. Acts 4:32-35, Psalm 133, I John 1:1-7, John 20:19-31. "Thomas, Dietrich and Martin"

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Death becomes just the beginning of life – Bonhoeffer! I am with you to the end – Jesus' words that comforted King! My Lord and my God! – Thomas. Let us, as a congregation, always make room for questions, for wondering, for conversation, for sharing of wounds, for openness to Jesus' presence, for forgiveness, and for the peace of God which passes all human understanding and which keeps our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

26 A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' 27 Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' 28 Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my

God!’ 29 Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.’ 30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. 31 But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

In the Name of the risen Christ. Amen.

On this very Sunday 73 years ago, Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer led a small church service in the Gestapo prison in Berlin. A British secret service agent who attended that service recalled, he “spoke to us in a manner which reached the hearts of all, finding just the right words to express the spirit of our imprisonment....He had hardly finished his last prayer when the door opened and two evil-looking men in civilian clothes came in and said, ‘Prisoner Bonhoeffer, get ready to come with us.’ Those words ‘come with us’ -- for all prisoners -- had come to mean one thing only – the scaffold. We bade him good-bye – he drew me aside – ‘this is the end,’ he said, ‘For me the beginning of life.’”

The next day, Monday, April 9, Pastor Bonhoeffer was executed for his part in the plot to kill Hitler. The doctor who witnessed his death was deeply moved by the way the pastor prayed before his execution. He said a short prayer and then climbed the steps to the gallows brave and composed. “In the almost 50 years that I worked as a doctor, I have hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God,” he concluded.

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We call this man “doubting Thomas.” He is but one of many of us who have our doubts, our worries, our days of un-faith. When Martin Luther King spoke on the night before his death, he doubted that he would see the promised land; he worried that his work had been in vain. When Dietrich Bonhoeffer considered becoming part of the assassination plot against Hitler, he had to weigh the idea of murder against the evil that his nation’s leader was perpetrating. His conscience drove him to accept the guilt he would surely feel if his plot had worked. Doubts and concerns troubled him during the days he spent in prison – worrying about his fiancée, his parents, his godchild, his pastor colleagues and students, wondering who he really was. He questioned himself in these words:

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calmly, cheerfully, firmly,
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Both in Thomas’ questions and in his words after meeting Jesus, “My Lord and my God!” we see ourselves. Un-faith becomes faith. Fear becomes hope.

Death becomes just the beginning of life – Bonhoeffer! I am with you to the end –Jesus’ words that comforted King! My Lord and my God! – Thomas. Let us, as a congregation, always make room for questions, for wondering, for conversation, for sharing of wounds, for openness to Jesus’ presence, for forgiveness, and for the peace of God which passes all human understanding and which keeps our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Memorable anniversaries,
Blessings,
Beth

Easter 2B. April 8, 2018, Dungeness Valley Lutheran, Sequim, WA. Acts 4:32-35, Psalm 133, I John 1:1-7, John 20:19-31. “Thomas, Dietrich and Martin”

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