

Show of hands. Who likes feeling left out, or that you might be missing something important? Well don't worry, you are in good company. Welcome to the world of FoMO. It's a thing! The acronym for "fear of missing out" is defined over by my good friends at urban dictionary as, "a state of mental or emotional strain caused by the fear of missing out," and "an omnipresent anxiety brought on by our cognitive ability to recognize potential opportunities." But that isn't all! You may be rolling your eyes, but digging a little deeper, on wikipedia, of course, shows that there is actually serious research going into this phenomena and how it is linked to pervasive connectedness via the internet and social media apps. Seriously, check it out, it's kind of fascinating. And a little depressing. Still rolling your eyes? How many times have you checked your email or facebook this morning? Twitter? It isn't just affecting the millennial generation and those younger, it really affects all of us who spend any amount of time on our devices.

Now, what in the world does any of this have to do with today? Bear with me. I kid you not, when I read the gospel reading for this morning my first reaction was "FoMO!!!!!" Now this probably stems from my realization that I too find myself mindlessly checking to see what has been going on in

the social realm more than I know is good for me. But think about it for a minute and put yourself in Thomas' shoes. The gospel doesn't say where Thomas was that evening when Jesus first came to his disciples. But once he returned to them they were beside themselves with the news of Jesus resurrection. "We have seen the Lord!" What!?!? Can you even begin to imagine how that must have felt? I would have been crushed. There isn't much worse than experiencing something you longed for vicariously through the jubilation of someone else.

Taking this into consideration, are you really surprised at how Thomas reacted? It really is a shame that he is perpetually labeled "Doubting Thomas." Especially when the disciples had been given the opportunity, at Jesus' behest, to explore the very wounds that Thomas insisted on seeing. As Jesus had promised in chapter 16, the disciples joy was indeed complete. He missed out, that was all there was to it. He spoke out of his despair and brokenness. He had followed Jesus as well, he had lost as much as they had. Sadly, he wasn't afforded the reunion the other disciples couldn't stop talking about. Thankfully his story was about to change.

After an excruciating week, Thomas gets a shot at redemption. For the second time, Jesus joined them and offered them His peace, an altogether strange thing to offer whilst appearing from nowhere, but that's

beside the point. He immediately turns his focus to Thomas who probably felt as you did when you were called to the principal's office. "Do not doubt but believe." "My Lord and my God!" What a profound statement of faith! There was absolutely no doubt in Thomas' words. Some more generous scholars like to call him Thomas the Theologian for this exchange, reflecting his insistence on searching and yearning for that encounter with God, in this case, the risen Lord.

Most scholars believe that at this point the author change's Jesus' focus away from Thomas and directs it squarely at those reading and hearing the gospel account. Written as many of the original witnesses were dying, either by persecution or old age, the evangelist's hope is that people excuse themselves from the need for solid, empirical data to affirm their faith. The same challenge exists for us today does it not? But don't forget, we have an advocate. We have the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The same spirit that stirred over the formless void before creation. The same Spirit that reanimated the dry bones strewn across the vast plain. The same Spirit the risen Lord breathed on His disciples was present when we were raised into new life in Him at our baptism. This Holy Spirit is the driving force of faith. It is the Spirit that takes our doubt and turns it on end. When we seek Christ in our neighbor, love our neighbor as ourselves,

respect the dignity of every human being, the Holy Spirit is present in us. When we open ourselves to encounter and rediscover God through worship, through forgiveness, through prayer, through humble service, through the beauty of creation, the Spirit is there allowing us, no, empowering us to cry out, "My Lord and My God!"

What are we missing out on when we are not open to the Spirit? What are we missing when we do not practice reconciliation? What are we missing when we do not trust the Spirit to tell our story, share our faith? I think the answer is simple. When we fail to open our eyes, our hearts, to the glory and presence of God around us, in creation, in our neighbor, in our daily lives are we not opening the same door to despair that Thomas was standing in? Thanks be to God, our Lord is patient, loving, and ever living; constantly calling us by name, just as he called to Mary outside the tomb, offering His peace and the Holy Spirit so we may see in in the world about us. Let the bold, let the doubting, let the lost, let all the beloved all cry out, "My Lord and my God!" I would hate to miss out on that.