

## Holy Humor Sunday

Kids joke: What did Jesus say to his disciples when he entered the upper room? TA DA!!!

I love the joke the kids told about what it was Jesus said to the disciples in the upper room; it just oozes with the wonderfully miraculous joke that God played on Satan. Holy Humor Sunday is a day that may take some time for us Episcopalians to grasp the concept. After all we have a reputation for being the 'frozen chosen'. Sometimes we can be a bit stuffy and rigid in our liturgical ways. While we understand that our liturgy is designed and does indeed take us to a closer journey with our Risen Lord, sometimes we must celebrate the Victory of life over death, of redemption over sin. Sometimes we must kick up our heels and give a big Alleluia!!! The miracle of the resurrection is one that is indefinable by human standards; it is something that no matter how we might try to rationalize or explain it away, it cannot be done. There is no rational explanation; there is no model or precedence from which to draw. Well, maybe Lazarus was the first, but then it was Jesus who called him back to life, just like Jesus calls us back to life.

While we understand the fear and trembling of the disciples on that glorious day of the resurrection; we come today to celebrate the event that left the world dumbfounded, left the devil scratching his horns, and has left us all a reason to be filled with joy.

It is that joy that brings us to this wonderful day when we can celebrate our joy through being silly and full of jokes and cute stories. We are FREE, FREE, FREE to live our life abundantly, confident in our salvation because of the victory that Jesus brought about on that Easter Sunday so very long ago.

It is the day when Jesus gave a big TA DA to evil, sin and death. This is the day when we can celebrate the triumph of all reason being turned upside down. This is the day when we can be assured that the God of our ancestors has been victorious over the worst of human degradation and has proven that while we must live in the midst of pain and suffering here on earth, there is a mansion awaiting us when we transition to life beyond here. It is the removal of the thin veil that separates this world and the next. It is the day we celebrate the reversal of the effects of the death on this body and the day when God would appear through locked doors to offer peace. Peace in knowing that while his journey as a human being was over he still LIVES!!!

Talk about Good News!!!

However, wonderful the joke on Satan was. There was still one who found it too difficult to believe. Thomas was out when Jesus made his magical entry. But Jesus wanted Thomas to believe too, so he came back when Thomas was there and then Jesus allowed Thomas to do as he had said he would need to do in order to believe. He let him put his hands in the nail holes and in his side that had been pierced. He was a man who always asked the questions that no one else had the courage to ask, Thomas was a man who was not about to be blindly led to follow someone who could not deliver as promised. Thomas was a man who could not believe that his friend and teacher who only three days ago had been so brutally killed and then buried in a tomb with a gigantic rock tolled in front of it,

could have lived through all of that and still had the strength to move the rock. After all he had seen him die with his own eyes. He heard him declared dead and likely saw them take his lifeless body away and watched as they rolled the stone over the entrance to his burial place. It is not reasonable to believe that Jesus could possibly have come to them and been alive. I am fairly sure Thomas did not believe it was a joke the other disciples were playing, but probably he thought they were seeing things.

Whatever his reason for the need to put his fingers in the wounds that contributed to his death and proved that Jesus was the person who had visited them in the upper room, Jesus honored that need and appeared one week later when Thomas was there.

☺ Someone asked Joseph of Arimathea once why he gave his beautiful, rock hewn tomb to someone else and he replied—because he only needed it for the weekend. ☺

The reality is that there is a Thomas in each of us as well. We all tend to have our moments of doubt, we all tend to say occasionally, ‘How can this be?’ We too look for evidence of the existence of God; we too tend to look for proof that Jesus not only lived, but died in the manner we have been taught and was resurrected. We tend to have a need to see the redeemed wounds of God incarnate. We too need PROOF!!!

“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.” That is you and I, we have not yet seen and yet have come to believe. We have come to believe because we have experienced the love of God in our lives, in a real and profound way. We have experienced the love of God in times when we did not feel we deserved God’s love, and yet were given it anyway. Sometimes through an inner peace, sometimes through the kind words or gestures of another, sometimes because of our witnessing something that defies reason, something that could only happen through divine intervention. Whatever has caused us to believe, we BELIEVE!!!

Alleluia!!!

The good news is that Jesus knows there is a ‘Doubting Thomas’ lurking in us and honors that need. Not with criticism or chastisement, but with grace by giving us glimpses of what we need to believe. Today is a day for us to celebrate those things in which we know happened, not because we were there, but because it is too wonderful and miraculous to have happened any other way; because we feel it in our hearts, we see it in our lives and we believe in a God who has thumbed his nose at evil, sin and death and won the victory for us.. FOR US!!! Jesus didn’t need to be resurrected for Jesus, Jesus was God incarnate—he was going back to the Father in heaven no matter what, Jesus did all of this for you and I.

Because of this gift you and I can celebrate today by dancing on the devils head and laughing at the joke God played by giving Jesus back to us so that the Thomas’ in all of us might believe even though we cannot see Jesus.

One final bit of humor for this Holy Humor Sunday-- One more bit of Holy Humor:

After the resurrection and disciples were still scattered about Jerusalem and the surrounding villages. John finds Peter and runs up to him. Excitedly he says, "Peter, Peter! I've got some good news and some bad news."

Peter takes hold of John and calms him down. "Take it easy, John. What is it? What's the good news?"

John says, "The good news is Christ is risen."

Peter says, "That's great! But, what's the bad news?"

John, looking around, says, "He's really steamed about last Friday."

Happy Holy Humor Sunday! Be joyful. And in the words of Peter Marshall, "Let us never live another day as if Jesus were dead."