



The Resurrection of Jesus

Cork Scripture Group

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The Sequence

- – General background
- - The Missing Middle
- – Resurrection in Luke
- – Resurrection in John



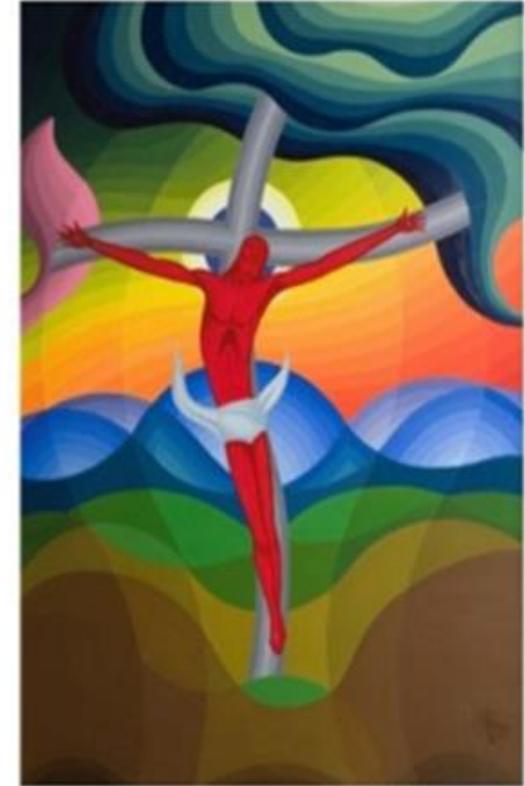
Early Christianity

“There exists in fact no positive evidence for a movement in the decades after Jesus’ death that was NOT shaped by belief in his resurrection. If there had been such a movement it was short lived and has left no traces in the literature, even the earliest of which is marked by the conviction that the one who was crucified is now more powerfully alive. Christianity came to birth because certain people were convinced that they had experienced God’s transforming power through the resurrection of Jesus.” (L.T. Johnson)

The Resurrection 1

“That God raised Jesus from the dead is the implicit- and often explicit – presupposition of all the New Testament writings”
(M.Eugene Boring)

- It was an event (not an idea!)
- The event was understood (by the early Church) as an act of God
- The event was unique and can only be perceived by faith. Historians cannot deal with such events but only with those who believed them.
- The event was an interpreted event that could only be perceived and appropriated in terms that made sense to those who believed in it - it is to be understood within Jewish apocalyptic expectation.



AllPosters

The Resurrection 2

- The concept of resurrection was already present in Jewish faith and was a commonplace in the theology of the Pharisees (Mk 12:18-27). It was not a theory about the immortality of the human soul but a way of affirming the faithfulness of God (theodicy).
- For the early Church the resurrection was not merely a spectacular thing that God did for Jesus but was rather the leading edge of the eschatological event in which God triumphs over evil and death.

Old Testament Background (1)

- *No belief in life after death whatsoever; life simply ceases to exist:*
 - Psalm 115:17 - "The dead do not praise the Lord, nor do any that go down into silence."
 - Ecclesiastes 9:5 - "The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no more reward, and even the memory of them is lost."
 - Job 7:9 - "As the cloud fades and vanishes, so those who go down to Sheol do not come up"
 - Job 14:10-14 - (in contrast to tree stumps, which might sprout again) "But mortals die, and are laid low; humans expire, and where are they? // so mortals lie down and do not rise again; until the heavens are no more, they will not awake or be roused out of their sleep. // If mortals die, will they live again?" (all of Job 14 argues: no!)

OT Background (2)

- *Expression of a Symbolic Belief in a general resuscitation or reanimation of many of the dead, or the whole nation, to a renewed life on earth:*
 - Isaiah 26:19 - "Your dead shall live, their corpses shall rise. O Dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy!"
 - Ezekiel 37 - Ezekiel's Vision of the Valley Full of Dry Bones, coming back to life with God's Spirit breathed into them.

OT Background (3)

- **Second Century BC:** *Beginning beliefs in continued life after death and/or resurrection from the dead for individuals:*
 - **Daniel 12:2** - "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."
 - **2 Macabees 7:14** - "One cannot but choose to die at the hands of men and to cherish the hope that God gives of being raised again by him."
 - **2 Macabees 12:43-45** - "...taking account of the resurrection. For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought."
 - **Wisdom 3:1-8** - "But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God... In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died... but they are at peace... their hope is full of immortality... In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble. They will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign over them for ever."
 - Ground for this prepared by such texts as Pss 22, 31, 73, 118, Job 19:25-28



Paul on the Resurrection

1Corinthians 15

- First written Christian reflection on the resurrection (ca 56 AD)
- Context of letter to a divided community whose problems Paul has addressed in the main body of the letter.
- Chapter 15: Paul initiates a lengthy reflection on the Resurrection rooted in Jewish ideas and Christian experience.

The Missing Middle

For us men and our salvation he
came down fro heaven and by
the Holy Spirit was incarnate of
the Virgin Mary and became man.

????????????????????????????

For our sake he was crucified
under Pontius Pilate he suffered
death and was buried and rose
again on the third day in
accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven

And in Jesus Christ, his only
begotten Son, our Lord

Who was conceived by the Holy
Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary:

????????????????????????????

Suffered under Pontius Pilate;
was crucified, dead and buried:
He descended into hell:

The third day he rose again from
the dead:

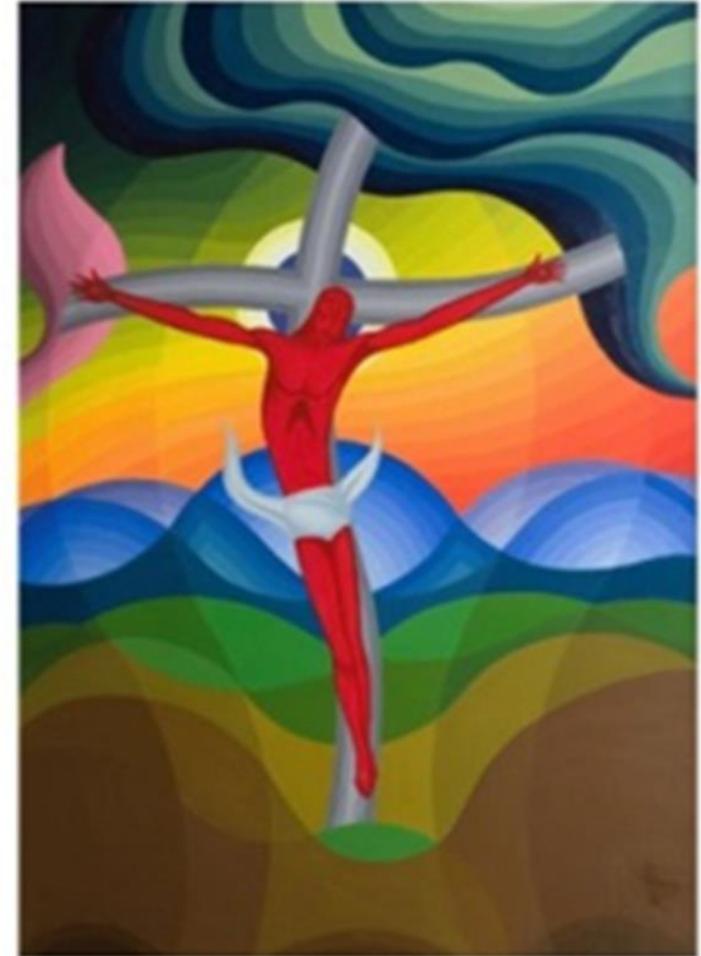
He ascended into heaven, and sits
at the right hand of God the
Father Almighty:

What Happened to the Missing Middle?

- We have tended to read the Gospels through the lens of the Creeds
- In so doing we have lost sight of why the Gospels were written (we got caught up in incarnation – redemption speak)
- The Evangelists were not thinking about dogmatic formulations but sharing their understanding of the Jesus event.

*How God became King
Getting to the Heart of the Gospels
(Tom Wright SPCK 2012)*

How are we saved and from what?



D) Overview of the Resurrection Accounts in the Four Gospels:

Event	Mark	Matthew	Luke	John
On Sunday morning, some Women Find Jesus' Tomb Empty	16:1-8	28:1-8	24:1-11	20:1-2, 11-13
Peter and the Beloved Disciple Run to the Tomb (in Luke: only Peter)	--	--	24:12	20:2-10
Jesus Appears to the Women (in John: only to Mary Magdalene)	[16:9-11]	28:9-10	--	20:14-18
The Guards Report back to the Authorities	--	28:11-15	--	--
Jesus Appears to Two Disciples on the Way to Emmaus	[16:12-13]	--	24:13-35	--
Jesus Appears to the Disciples on Sunday Evening in Jerusalem	--	--	24:36-43	20:19-23
Jesus Appears again to the Disciples a Week Later (with Thomas)	--	--	--	20:24-29
Jesus Appears to the Eleven as They Sat at Table	[16:14-18]	--	--	--
Jesus Appears to the Eleven on a Mountain in Galilee (The Great Commission)	--	28:16-20	--	--
Jesus' Last Words and His Ascension to Heaven, from Bethany	[16:19-20]	--	24:44-53	--
The Original Ending of John	--	--	--	20:30-31
Jesus Appears again to the Disciples at the Sea of Tiberias	--	--	--	21:1-23
The Second Ending of John	--	--	--	21:24-25



Luke's Easter : Five Scenes

- 24:1-12
The Women at the Tomb
- 24:13-35
The Disciples on the Road
- 24:36-43
Jesus Appears to his Disciples
- 24: 44 -53
The Ascension (on Sunday?)
- Acts 1:1-11
The Ascension (40 days later)

24:1-12

The Women at the Tomb

- “They came to the tomb”
(The women who had followed him from Galilee 23:49, 8:3)
- They were “perplexed” (see 9:7 and Acts 2:12)
- Two men... in dazzling clothes – a manifestation from heaven
- He has been raised (divine passive – again!)
- “Remember... they remembered”. (key to understanding Easter!)
- Women named (some of them)
- Apostles do not believe but consider it an “idle tale”
- Peter runs to the tomb (echoes of John 20)





24:13-35 The Road to Emmaus

- Unique to Luke – a focus on the meaning of resurrection faith
- Two disciples (not apostles!)
- Their eyes were kept from recognising him (divine passive - To see the risen Christ is a gift!)
- Their summary – accurate but inadequate
- *"How foolish you are and slow of heart to believe everything the prophets spoke about."*
- Scripture is the key to understanding resurrection!
"Beginning with Moses and the Prophets he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the Scriptures."

Road to Emmaus (2)

- The idea of the fulfilment of Scripture is not so much about predictions coming true as the accomplishment of God's will as revealed in the Scriptures. Who God is and what God wants is made known through the Scriptures – the whole story of Israel. Now in the life death and resurrection of Jesus this is fully revealed and God's saving will is accomplished (or fulfilled!)
- Stay with us...
- He took bread, blessed and broke it (9:16, 22:19)
- Did not our hearts burn within us as he explained the Scriptures to us
- Sharing their story with the community who have come to faith.

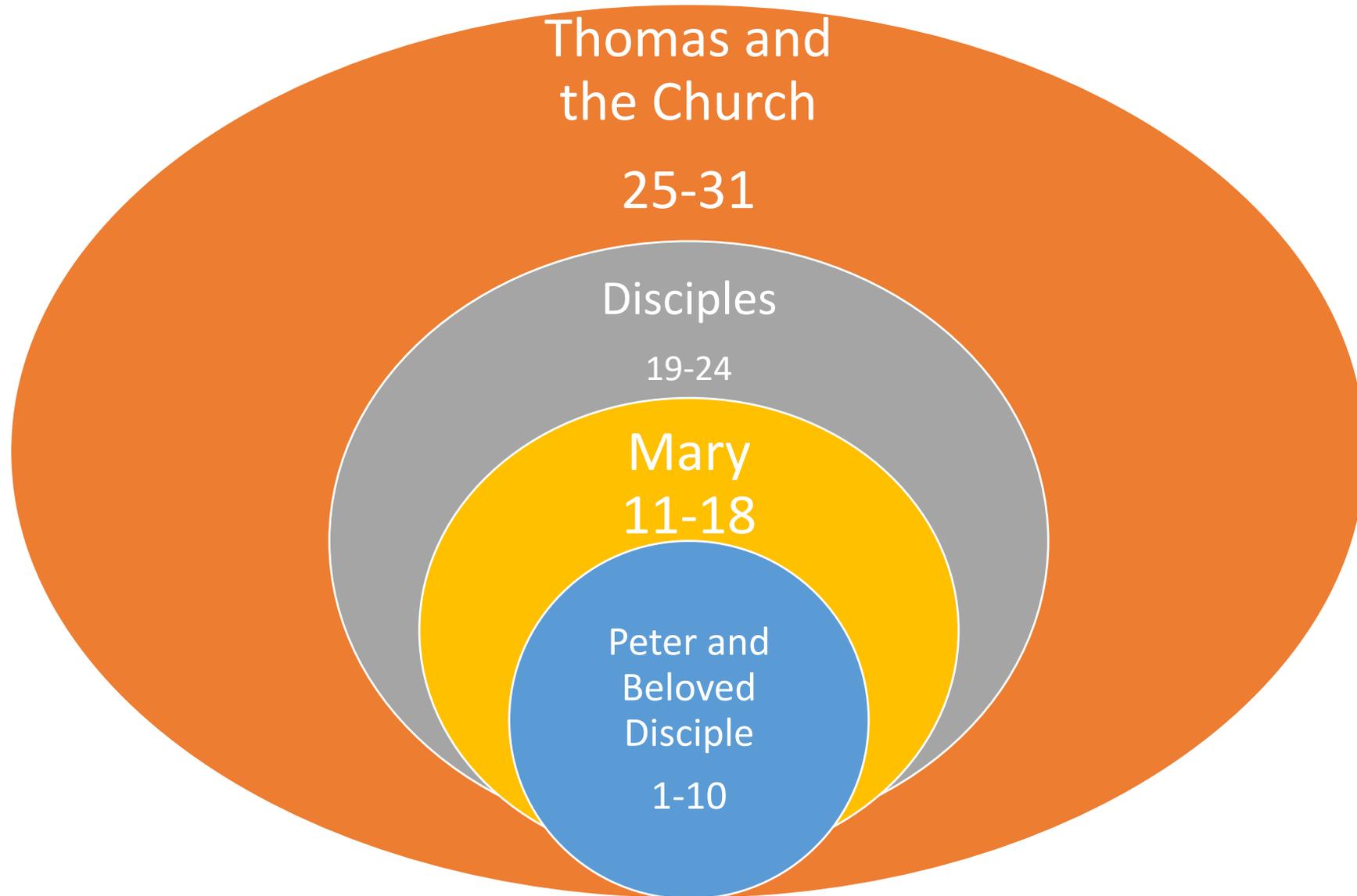


24:36-43 Jesus appears to the Disciples



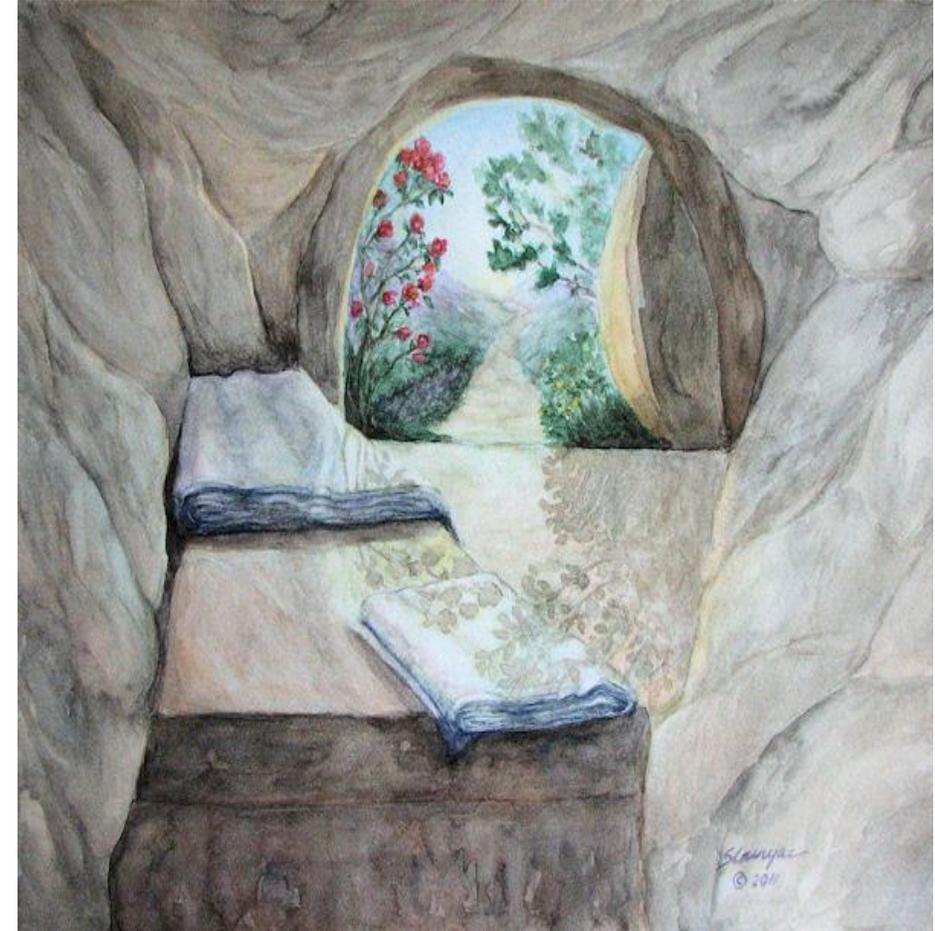
- “Peace” - *THE* Easter greeting (Rom 5:1, Phil 4:7)
- *Seeing a ghost* – NT authors all keen to assert that resurrection is neither resuscitation nor is it simply an apparition. Luke emphasizes a bodily aspect (contrast with Paul in 1Cor 15). These are not to be harmonized – they highlight different theological perspectives on this mystery.
- *“In their joy they were disbelieving and wondering”* Tension around naming the experience
- Speaks again about the fulfilment of Scriptures and the mission that results from it.
- Repentance and forgiveness to be proclaimed to the whole world in the “power” of the Spirit.
- Easter – Ascension on same day, the first day of the week!

John 20:1-31: Resurrection Faith



From Darkness to A Dawning

- 1, Mary, Sees that the stone had been taken away
- 2, Runs to tell the two most important disciples
- 4 – 7, They run to the tomb – they both see the cloths (body not stolen nor resuscitated contrast with Lazarus 11:44)
- 8, Inside the tomb the Beloved Disciple sees and believes
- 9, The key role of knowing the Scripture in order to come to faith (2:22)



The First Believer...

- The drama at the tomb is not about what happened then
- It is an invitation to the reader to consider the meaning of Easter
- Three characters see the stone rolled away, and the cloths of death set aside - God has intervened
- Only one sees and believes
- In the Gospel tradition the beloved disciple is the only one to come to faith on the basis of the empty tomb – without seeing the risen Christ
- The later generations have the Scriptures and the Spirit to guide them into all truth (14:16-17; 16:12-13)

Mary Magdalene and the Gardener...11-18

- 11-13

Mary at the tomb weeping (11:31 -33) sees the angels in white (compare synoptics) Further proof of God present. Yet she **does not know** where they have laid him.

- 14-16

She sees Jesus but **does not know** who he is. His question recalls 1:41 and her question intensifies the irony “if you have taken him away”. Situation of unbelief quickly transformed by being called by name (10:3,14) She recognises her teacher.

Do not cling to me... A new relationship

- 17 Her desire is to hold on to her earthly Lord thus indicating that hers is not yet an Easter faith – Jesus' return to the Father brings a new relationship for her and all believers. (14:1-6, 19-20)
- 18 Faithful to her mission she becomes the first to proclaim Easter faith: *I have seen the Lord!*



20:19-20 Christ Revealed

- In a context of closed doors and fear he stood in their midst (i.e the disciples not the apostles nor the twelve!): he is where they are gathered!

He gifts them with shalom (14:27) as he shows them his hands and his side; the risen Christ is their Crucified Lord (16:33, Mi 5:2-5, Ps 85:8-12)
The response to this presence is joy (16:20-22)



20:21-23 Missioned and Inspired

- **Shalom provides context for recognition of his presence**
- **Repeated now to give context for the mission of the disciples**
- **IT IS THE SAME MISSION AS THAT OF JESUS AND IS ENTIRELY DEPENDANT UPON RELATIONSHIP OF LOVE**
- **“ As the Father has sent me so I send you”**

The Spirit Breathed into Them

- *When he had said this he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit...'*

- Echoes of

And God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being.” (Gen 2:7)

“ breathe upon these slain that they may live... I will put my spirit within you and you shall live.(Ezek 37:9)

- Also to be read in light of Jn 19:30

“Then he bowed his head and gave over his Spirit”.

Thomas and Faith in the Risen Christ

Thomas

11:16 “Let us also go that we may die with him”

14:5 “Lord we do not know where you are going, how can we know the way?”

On both occasions Thomas speaks for the group and in both instances indicates how completely he fails to understand what is unfolding in the revelation.

This is confirmed now by his refusal to accept the Easter testimony of the community: “We have seen the Lord”.

What does Thomas want?

Thomas, absent from the community when gathered on Sunday, does not experience with them the Risen Lord.

What is his problem?

“I don’t believe you”

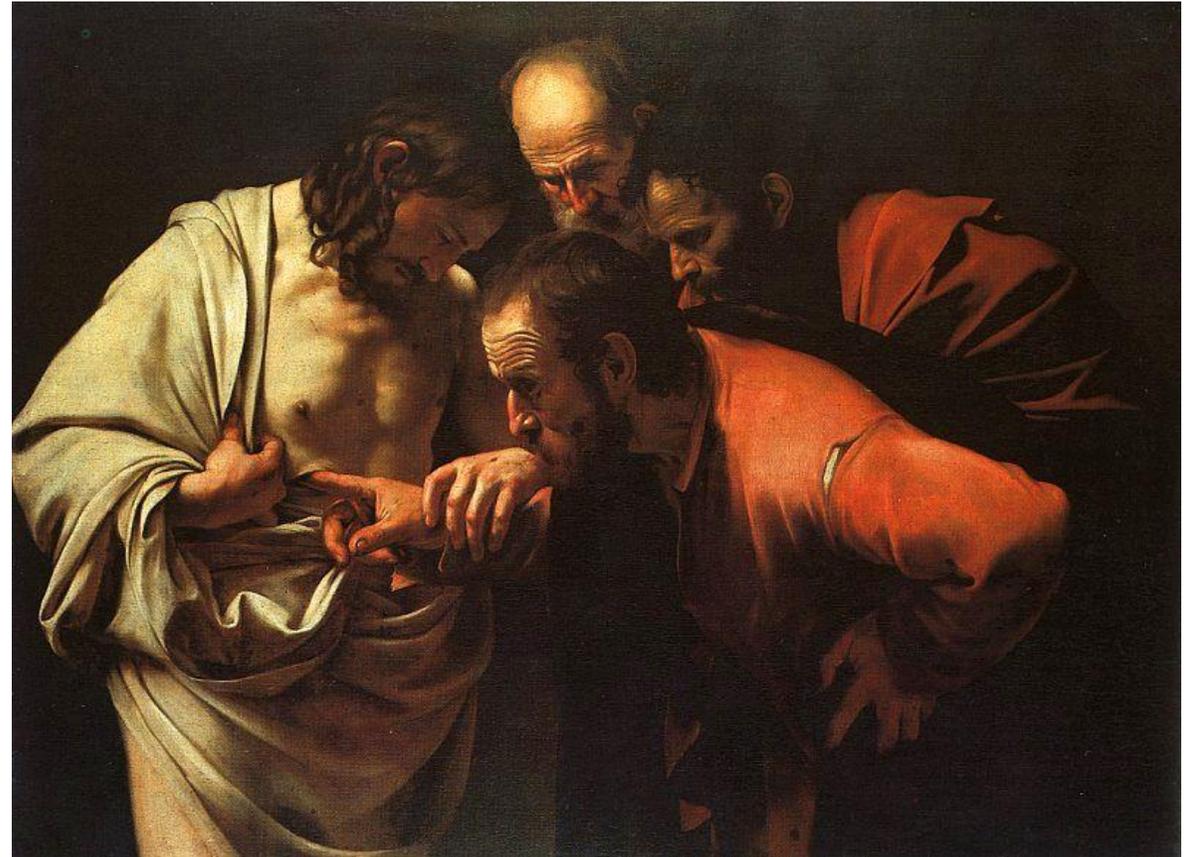
or

“You may have seen him but I haven’t and until I do I won’t believe!!”

Does he want to see a risen Christ or a resuscitated Jesus?

What does Thomas Get?

- The following Sunday gathered again
- Jesus stands in their midst again (though the doors are closed)
- Shalom is the greeting again.
- Thomas invited to an experience of the Risen Lord – (touch?)
- “Don’t continue unbelieving but believing”



My Lord and My God

THE declaration of faith in the Fourth Gospel

Background of possible polemic with Emperor Domitian (81-96 AD) who insisted on title: **DOMINUS et DEUS NOSTER**

Blessed are those who believe: A word to the reader and to the Church

The risen Christ is encountered in the missioned community of faith gifted by the Spirit.

Sine dominico non possumus – The Martyrs of Abitene





A 21st Century Perspective

- Christ risen and glorified is the wellspring of our hope... Christ's resurrection is not an event of the past; it contains a vital power which has permeated this world. Where all seems to be dead, signs of the resurrection suddenly spring up.(EG 275-276)
- The kingdom is here, it returns it struggles anew. Christ's resurrection everywhere calls forth seeds of that new world; even if they are cut back they grow again for the resurrection is already secretly woven into the fabric of this history for Jesus did not rise in vain.(EG 278)