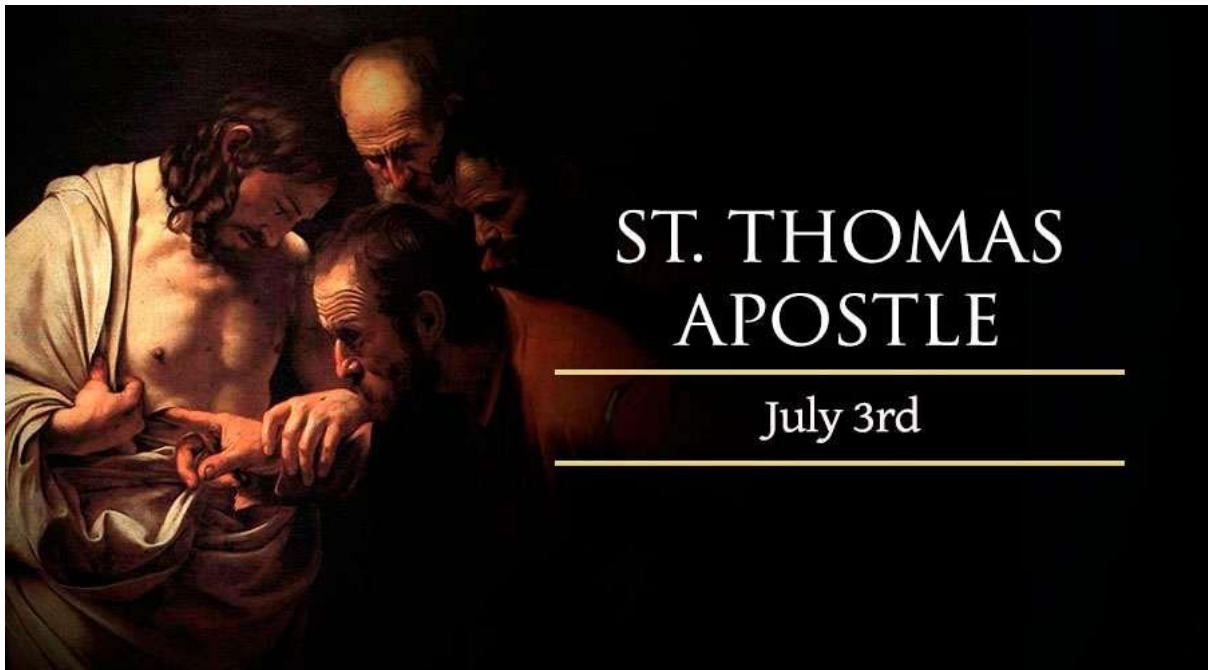


St. Thomas



On July 3, the Church celebrates the feast day of St. Thomas the Apostle. Best known for his initial unwillingness to believe the other apostles in their claim that Jesus had risen from the dead, St. Thomas can teach the faithful about believing without seeing. As an apostle, Thomas was dedicated to following the Lord. Upon hearing that Jesus was returning to Judea, an area that would pose dangers due to the growing animosity of the authorities there, he immediately said to the other apostles, "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (Jn 11: 16).

Yet despite this determination, Thomas proved not only too weak to stand beside Jesus as he faced his crucifixion, but also doubted the Lord's Resurrection when he was told about it by the other apostles. Denying their story, he told them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe" (Jn 20:25).

A week later, Christ appeared and said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." When Thomas did so he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" In his general audience on September 27, 2006, Pope Benedict XVI spoke of St. Thomas, explaining that we can learn from his doubts, which show us "that Jesus can now be recognised by his wounds rather than by his face."

"The Apostle Thomas' case is important to us for at least three reasons," said the Pope. "First, because it comforts us in our insecurity; second, because it shows us that every doubt can lead to an outcome brighter than any uncertainty; and, lastly, because the words that Jesus addressed to him remind us of the true meaning of mature faith and encourage us to persevere, despite the difficulty, along our journey of adhesion to him."

After Pentecost, St. Thomas is traditionally believed to have preached the Good News to the Persians and Medes, until he reached India, where he evangelised and was eventually martyred in 72 A.D. St. Thomas' feast day is July 3, and he is the patron of architects and builders.