

## ***From The Vicar....***

In the Christian Calendar of holy days and saints' days, we come to St Thomas on 3<sup>rd</sup> July. St Thomas was the origin of the expression you may have heard when someone is referred to as *a doubting Thomas*.

It all goes back to an incident in the Bible, where St John's gospel tells us that Thomas was reluctant to believe the other disciples when, after the first Easter Day, the other disciples told him that they had seen Jesus risen from the dead. Thomas's response was to say that unless he saw Jesus himself, and touched the wounds in Jesus's hands and feet from the Crucifixion as physical evidence that this was no ghost, then he would not believe. Later, Jesus does appear to the disciples again, while Thomas is with them; this time Thomas's response is of profound faith – he simply says 'My Lord and my God!'

I like Thomas, with his mixture of doubt and faith. Thomas has many questions, and in that respect is very modern. Thomas is like many people, where faith is questioning, and coexists with doubt. As a scientist that rings bells with me, because science is a questioning discipline, and science and faith look at things in different ways. But what about you? If you are a questioner in your nature, then I want to say to you that St Thomas shows us that doubt and faith often run alongside each other. There are times when we may move between the two. If you have doubts, it should not be a barrier to becoming a worshipping Christian.

On something else; we are hoping to launch a ***Junior Church*** in September. The idea is that on the second and fourth Sundays of the month children and parents would come to Church together, the children going off to the hall for their activities after a few minutes, and coming back into church to rejoin their parents for the last fifteen minutes of the main service. On the third Sunday of the month we would have a very informal family communion for all ages at 9.30, in the time currently when Early Birds meets.

I would welcome expressions of interest from parents and children – just get in touch. We will do some further publicity nearer the time. Watch this space, and please pray for this vital part of our developing Mission Plan, that God may bless it with the gift of his Holy Spirit.

One more thing – at the Family Service on 5<sup>th</sup> July we will welcome two Christian magicians – come along and see what this is all about!

My love and prayers,

***Stephen***