

## From the Vicar...

### COME AND SEE

#### THREE SUMMER SAINTS WHO RECOGNIZED THE LORD

#### REFLECTIONS FOR JULY AND AUGUST

July and August slow us down. Vacations, longer evenings, and a lighter calendar loosen routine's hold and leave room to look more closely at our lives and at the Lord who is always near. The saints of these summer months are good company for that looking. In Thomas, we meet a man whose doubts God patiently answered. In Mary Magdalene, we see grief become the first proclamation of Easter. In Bartholomew, a quick dismissal gives way to recognition and a faith that sees far more than it expected. Each shows the same truth from a different angle: Christ meets us where we are, in our doubt, our sorrow, even our prejudice, and He opens our eyes to how much nearer He is than we ever imagined. May the slower pace of these months give us the same gift: eyes ready to recognize Him.

#### INVITE HIM INTO WHAT FEELS IMPOSSIBLE —

#### ST. THOMAS, APOSTLE (JULY 3)

When we think of Thomas coming to faith in the Resurrection of Christ (cf. John 20:24-29), what should stand out is the gentleness and understanding of a God attentive to our every need. Notice that Christ did not spurn Thomas. He did not expel him from the room or dismiss him from the Apostles. Instead, He gave him everything he needed to believe. It's almost funny: when Thomas set his conditions for belief — to touch the wounds and side of Christ — he likely thought them insurmountable. Yet a little while later, Christ gave him exactly what he had deemed impossible. God works the same way with us, even in our daily lives. How often do we build mental barriers and assume God cannot cross them? How often do we doubt His willingness to enter our hardships or to mend an injury between us and someone we love? Two things are worth holding onto: first, that God loves us more than we can imagine and desires our good in every way; and second, that there is no problem, injury, or situation He cannot take care of if only we invite Him in and abandon ourselves to His care. His solutions may not be the ones we expect, but they will be what is truly best for us. So let us search our hearts: where have we quietly closed the door, already deciding that God cannot or will not enter?

#### INVITE HIM INTO WHAT FEELS IMPOSSIBLE —

#### ST. THOMAS, APOSTLE (JULY 3)

#### GO AND SHARE THE JOY YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN —

#### ST. MARY MAGDALENE (JULY 22)

There has been much conjecture about Mary Magdalene, most of it foolish and fueled by cinematic imagination. From *The Da Vinci Code* to magazines aimed at a popular and gullible audience, stories proliferate about a supposed relationship between Jesus and her. Better to stay with scripture and be inspired by the gospel rather than someone else's invention. On her feast, the Church recounts her grief

at Jesus' death, her belief in His rising, and her work as a disciple proclaiming it (cf. John 20:11-18). In these brief lines, Mary Magdalene traces the very path of Jesus' followers and, no doubt, encourages them along it. The gospel recalls her joy, yet that joy is not hers to keep. To her is given the charge of carrying the good news of Christ's triumph over death, the confirmation of all He had preached. In accepting this by faith and longing to share it, she becomes a model of discipleship, one of the first disciples of Christ's Church.

SEEK HIM IN THE PLACES YOU'D DISMISS—

ST. BARTHOLOMEW, APOSTLE (AUGUST 24)

Bartholomew, who also bore the name Nathanael in John's account of his calling, was granted insight into who Jesus truly is. That gift is surprising because when he is first invited to meet Jesus, Nathanael dismisses Him simply because of where He is from. From that dismissal, Nathanael humbles himself enough to accept the invitation and then proclaims the One he has encountered: "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel" (John 1:49). He will learn much about the Jesus he has met and recognized as king. He will come to see that Christ's kingdom is not of this world but far greater (cf. Revelation 21). He will come to see that Christ is king not for a few years but for all time. And so, just as Christ broadened the vision of so many, He broadened the vision of Bartholomew. Let us pray for the same gift of faith: to go and meet Christ in the lowly places where we are tempted to dismiss Him (among the poor, for instance), to recognize Him there, and to let Him show us how much more present He is than we ever imagined.

LOOK CLOSELY THIS SUMMER: HE IS NEARER THAN WE IMAGINE.

—DAVID J. CONRAD, M.A. THEOLOGY