

## 'Good above all others'

27 4 14

Almighty Father,  
you have given your only Son to die for our sins  
and to rise again for our justification:  
grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness  
that we may always serve you  
in pureness of living and truth.

My text may be found in today's Psalm, Psalm 16 and verse 1:

'You are my Lord,  
my good above all others.'

My father's name was Thomas. Is that why I like the apostle almost as much as I like our own patron saint, Bartholomew? Not sure – but as I was reflecting on today's sermon, in particular today's gospel passage, there is something very honest and genuine, direct and strong, about doubting Thomas. Yes, he did doubt but Thomas's faith in Jesus was real. He could with courage say in John 11 v16, 'Let us also go that we may die with him.' He could with honesty say in John 14 v5, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' And today, we can hear him with conviction say in John 20 v25, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.' And, of course, he does and he does and he goes on to spread the good news of the gospel and to die, if tradition is to be

believed, on the Indian subcontinent, speared to death and buried in Mylapore near Madras.

What I like about Thomas is that he was in touch with Christ, that he was touched by Christ and in touching the risen Christ, his doubt is laid to rest, his faith confirmed. What appeals to me is his willingness to put his doubt to the test. I admire his honest pragmatism: If I can do this, then I will believe. And the test – to see for himself, to feel for himself. Thomas wants first-hand experience of the facts; he wants to see Jesus with his own eyes and to touch him with his own hands. I love it – don't you ? We live in period of atheism and doubt. Nothing new there but today's atheists are of a more militant, evangelising sort. They love to challenge so my challenge for them, were they ever to bother to listen, would be for each one personally to set down for themselves the criteria by which God could show them he exists. My fear is nothing would convince them even if a man were indeed in fact to rise again from the dead. There are none so deaf as those who choose not to listen; none so blind as those who do not wish to see.

I could stop there but before I do let me just turn to today's text –

'You are my Lord,  
my good above all others.'

The words of the psalmist could have been said by Thomas or Bartholomew or Martha, Mary's sister, but here the psalmist is not only acknowledging God as Lord and speaking directly to him, he says something wonderful: that God is his 'good above all others'. Now what you might consider to be good is often a matter of personal taste, individual judgement – for example: good food, good

drink, good company; the love of others; being here in France. Whatever you say is good says a lot about you but the surprising claim the psalmist is making is that God is 'a good above all others'. In quality terms, the good that is God is unmatched, unmatchable. His goodness is like his peace – it surpasses all understanding. Suffice it for me to say that in God we can find true and lasting satisfaction, loved as a parent loves their child.

So today on the Second Sunday of Easter, Low Sunday, when we have laid up in St Bart's the standard of the Royal British Legion in Brittany, let us also lay to rest our doubts, accept God as our Lord and let him be to us the source of a good above all others.

I have spoken in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,  
Amen.

*Preached at the Eucharist*

*St Bartholomew's, Dinard*

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G: Sermons 29 :Only good

