

Quest 11th April 2021

### True or false?

"Eating garlic can cure coronavirus"

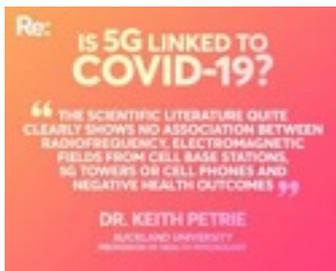
"Pres. Trump called his own Republican voters 'the dumbest group of voters in the country'."

"Pope Francis backed Donald Trump's presidency campaign"

"The iPhone 5 was going to have Hologram Projection"

"Blonds are becoming extinct, says Science"

"The spread of 5G technology caused covid-19."



These are all examples of what we call '**fake news**' and they are all false - but millions of people believed them! Today in Quest we are looking at the idea of "truth" - and how we believe something is true or not. The Gospel story is about the disciple who earned the nickname 'Doubting Thomas' because he wouldn't believe that Jesus had risen until he had actually touched the wounds in his body:

### **Jesus Appears to His Disciples**

*"On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.*

*Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgive*

*Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"*

*But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."*

*A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."*

*Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"*

*Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

*Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."*



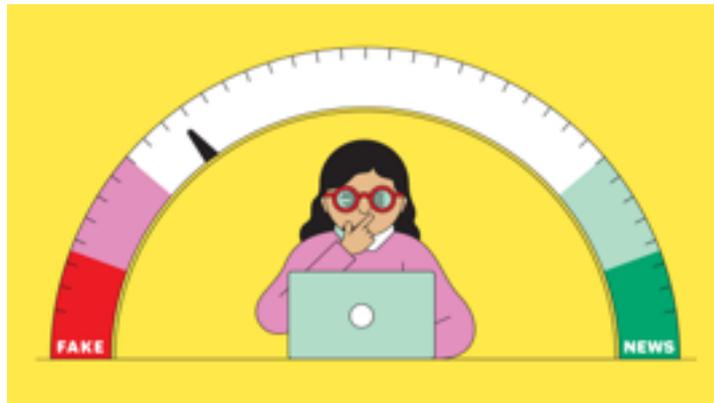
Unlike much of the Bible, this is a story that may be easier for us to understand than for people at the time, 2,000 years ago. This is because since Jesus' time we have learned so much more about the world and especially what we call 'Science'. We have learned how to put forward ideas, to test them with experiments and to see if they turn out to be true or not. This is what Thomas is doing; he doesn't believe the ridiculous idea that Jesus has come back to life; he wants to put the idea to the test, by looking at the marks where the nails were hammered through Jesus' hands, where his side was slashed by a spear. Then he believes. (Thomas would have made a good scientist).

But then Jesus makes a very good point, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed". Two thousand years later we cannot touch Jesus and look at his wounds but as Christians we believe. At the end of the day, we cannot 'prove' that Jesus rose from the dead, but we can have faith in what we read about his resurrection in the Gospels, what eye witnesses at the time saw and recorded and what Jesus himself said.

As a History teacher, I am used to discussing how 'true' a piece of evidence is; can we trust it? Does it agree with other reports? Why was it made in the first place?

We all need to use these skills in our present age, when information is so widely available, especially online. Fake news can be highly dangerous - it may have been spread in order

to deceive, it may just be misinformation, the truth may be labelled 'fake' because it's not what we want to hear. (Pres. Trump was very good at saying this!)

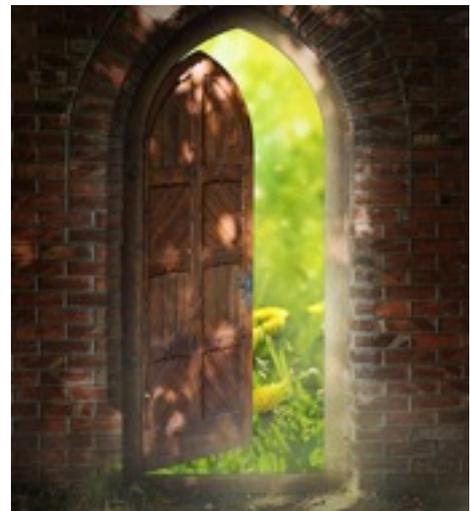


So perhaps we should all become 'Doubting Thomas' - questioning, checking, reflecting. There's nothing wrong with having doubts - **but doubting and questioning something can also help us get nearer to the truth.**

Things to do:

1. Read the 'Door to Discovery' prayer

How strangely comforting, Lord,  
That so many of your servants  
Have doubted you.  
So,  
If I cannot always see the sense  
Of your Word;  
If I do not always feel confident  
About my faith;  
If I wonder where your love is  
In the face of pain and death;  
I am not the first.  
A great company of saints and martyrs  
Has felt this way before me.  
Now, in your presence,  
They see face to face  
And know as they are known.  
Teach me, like them,  
Not so much to fear doubt  
As to see it  
As a sign of the mystery of life  
And a door to discovery.



(From More than Words Saint Andrew Press 2008.)

2. Draw an open doorway and in it write or draw what you believe about Jesus and Christianity e.g. him curing people, him on the cross, him with his 12 disciples.

