

It's Okay to Be Conflicted

This Week's Readings at Mass

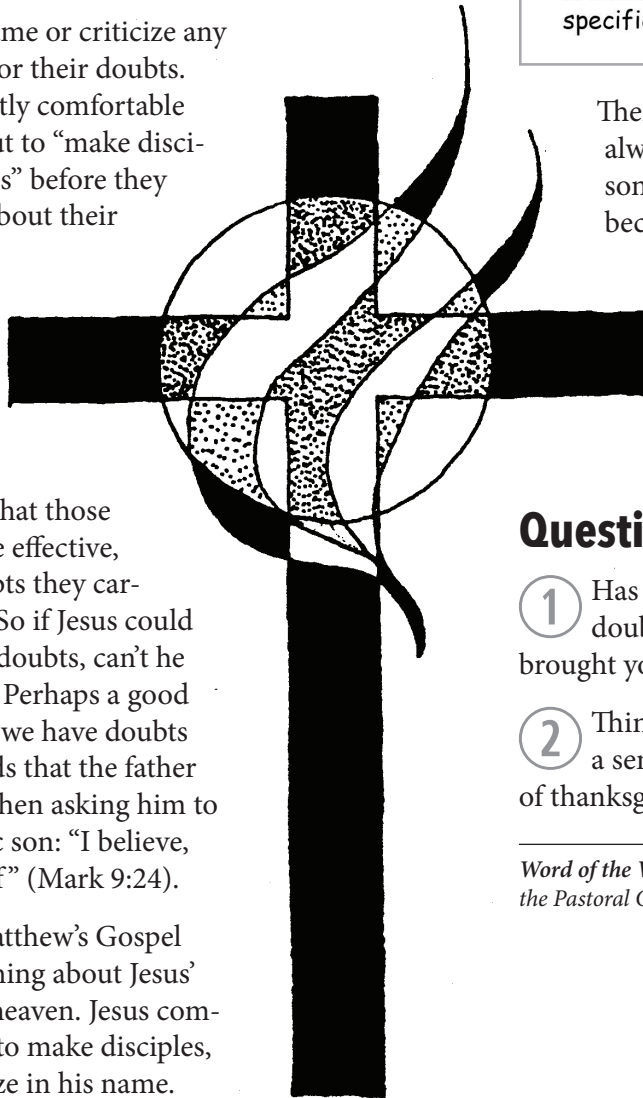
- ▶ Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40 - Proofs of God's love
- ▶ Romans 8:14-17 - Children of God through adoption
- ▶ Matthew 28:16-20 - Commission of the Apostles

The Gospel reading today is from the very last verses of Matthew's Gospel. The eleven disciples (Judas is no longer with them) have the experience of both worshipping and doubting. We don't know whether some of them worshipped Jesus while others doubted him, or if all of them had the conflicting experience of worshipping and doubting simultaneously. Either way, this detail by Matthew can be helpful to anyone in the 2,000 years since then who has struggled with doubts about Jesus.

Jesus doesn't shame or criticize any of the disciples for their doubts. He seems perfectly comfortable sending them out to "make disciples of all nations" before they are 100% clear about their faith. Because we and two billion other Christians in the world today worship

Jesus, we know that those 11 disciples were effective, despite any doubts they carried with them. So if Jesus could work with their doubts, can't he work with ours? Perhaps a good prayer for when we have doubts include the words that the father spoke to Jesus when asking him to heal his epileptic son: "I believe, help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

Interestingly, Matthew's Gospel doesn't say anything about Jesus' Ascension into heaven. Jesus commissions the 11 to make disciples, teach, and baptize in his name.



Then, his last words are "behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." Obviously, something happened to his body physically because we can no longer see Jesus, but we are left with the promise that he is, and will always be, with us invisibly. His words bring us full circle to the promise before his birth that he would be "Emmanuel," meaning "God is with us."

Questions of the Week

- 1 Has there been a time(s) when you have doubted Jesus, God, or your faith? What brought you through that period?
- 2 Think about a time when you have experienced a sense of God or Jesus with you. Say a prayer of thanksgiving for that gift of awareness.

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