

You believe in me, Thomas, because you have seen me, says the Lord; blessed are those who have not seen me, but still believe!

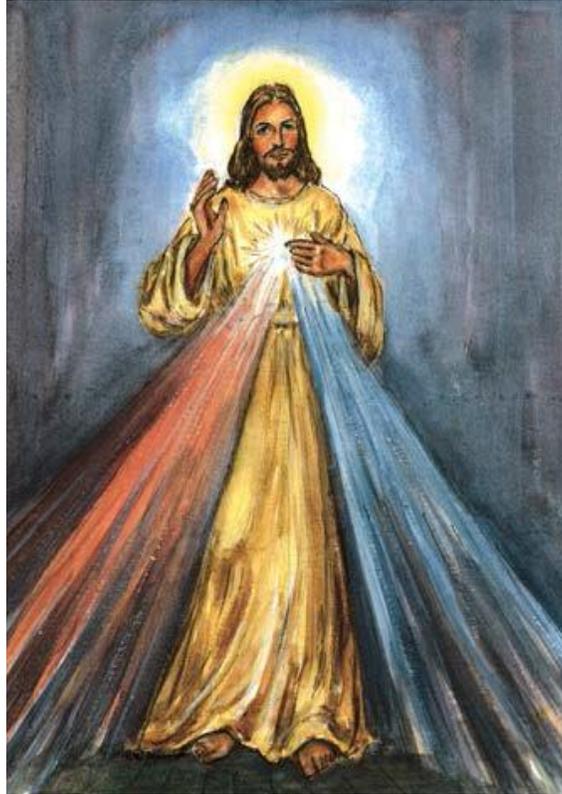
“Blessed are they who have not seen but have believed.”

Every year on this second Sunday of Easter, the Apostle Thomas takes center stage. We have come to know him as “doubting Thomas” as though he were an exception to the others. The rest of the Apostles, however, did not believe in the Resurrection instantly and were very much like him. This episode between the Risen Christ and Thomas in the upper room helps us to see what Easter faith is like. We can reflect about the doubts of Thomas because some of them may be our own as well.

Thomas’ first doubt was hesitation about the truth of the Resurrection because he could not see the Risen Lord. He represents the transition we all have to make from looking for a visual experience of Christ with our eyes to experiencing the invisible, spiritual presence of Christ in sign and sacrament.

Although we cannot see the Lord, He is here. He is with us in the sacraments of the Church, in the community of believers and in the life of the Church. The Easter candle, symbolizes His presence for us. Christ is not the candle, of course, but it reminds us that He is among us. Even though we cannot see Him with our eyes, we can reach Him through faith. This is the beauty of our Easter faith. It means going from physical sight with our eyes to spiritual sight through faith. Our saving contact with the Risen Lord is not visual but spiritual. Jesus says that those are truly blessed who have not seen but have believed. St John states at the end of today’s reading that through belief we will have life in Christ’s name.

Thomas’ second doubt had to do with the nail marks, the wounds. Thomas doubted that these wounds that he had seen could lead to Risen glory. He knew that they led to death, but to Risen life? Thomas wanted to see the scars. He knew the scars were real and if the person appeared had those scars, he would believe that Christ is truly risen.



Jesus conquered death and rose to glory. Through our Easter faith, we cannot only survive suffering and setbacks but also come through them to new life. Easter faith means that we don’t have to stay behind closed doors, fearful of what might happen in our life. Out of any kind of death, the Risen Lord can bring us new life. Jesus rose from death to new life and with Him so can we.

Thomas’ third doubt was that the crucified and Risen Christ really forgave the Apostles for abandoning Him. They had left their Master and Thomas found it hard to believe that the triumphant Lord returned with forgiveness for them. Yet, Jesus did exactly that in the first scene of today’s Gospel reading.

Maybe we have doubts that Jesus really forgives us. This is also part of our Easter faith. Our life as individuals and as a parish is not always as ideal as that portrayed in the Acts of the Apostles in today’s first reading. The gift of Christ’s forgiveness gives us the power to seek healing and to receive a new start from Him. Jesus’ forgiveness that we receive in the Sacrament of Penance is the healing power of Easter at work in our souls. Forgiveness is Easter Sunday active in our hearts.

In today’s Gospel we see the birth of Easter faith in St Thomas. We see that we encounter Christ not with our eyes but through faith. We know that everything that happens to us, even our wounds, can be part of a way to new life. We know that if we repent we can always receive Christ’s forgiveness and begin again.

“Blessed are they who have not seen but have believed.”

