



Bringing Home the Word

Second Sunday of Easter (Sunday of Divine Mercy) (A)

April 16, 2023

“I Doubt It,” Say All of Us

By Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Skepticism is a characteristic of a critical mind. Some claims are just too fantastic to trust: no salve can relieve you of all pain; no investment is certain to double your money; no politician can keep all promises; no one comes back from the dead. Who of us can fault Thomas for his initial skepticism?

Thomas has been known throughout history as “the doubter.” However, he might be considered the patron saint of all of us. Because of his absence when Jesus stood in the midst of the

community, Thomas was expected to believe on the word of others. Like Thomas, we are torn between believing because of an experience of Jesus, and believing on the word of others. We all would prefer a direct, profound experience. However, that’s not what we’re offered.

But within the community we can indirectly experience Jesus—his goodness, his unselfish service to others, his desire to bring people together in peace and harmony. Today’s first reading provides a glimpse of such a believing community devoted to “the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers” (Acts 2:42). Like our patron Thomas, we might be skeptical at first, but it is within a family or community of kindness and generosity that we can have our own experience of the risen Jesus. †

A Word from Pope Francis

The Lord is not looking for perfect Christians; the Lord is not looking for Christians who never doubt and always flaunt a steadfast faith. When a Christian is like that, something isn’t right. No, the adventure of faith, as for Thomas, consists of lights and shadows. Otherwise, what kind of faith would that be?

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Sunday Readings

Acts 2:42–47

Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

1 Peter 1:3–9

You may have to suffer through various trials, so...the genuineness of your faith...may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

John 20:19–31

These [signs] are written that you may [come to] believe that Jesus is the Messiah,...and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

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- Do I struggle with doubt?
- Where do I feel my faith strengthened and renewed?

Persevere in Faith!

By Fr. Daniel P. Horan, OFM

Sometimes I find it very difficult to believe. I'm sure I'm not alone, that I'm not the only one who asks whether what I profess to be true is indeed real. Surely there are many others who doubt God's love for them or that God even exists at all. I know there are many greater and holier exemplars of Christian living who likewise struggled from time to time with "dark nights of the soul," with uncertainty, with doubt.

The apostle Thomas—the one many know as "doubting Thomas"—exemplifies holiness that brings comfort to me during my faith struggles and also humanizes the saints. We are accustomed to thinking that to be holy or a disciple is to be unshakable in our convictions and sure-footed in our beliefs. And yet, what is revealed in the Gospels and in the lives of the saints is that the kind of sanctity God desires is not one of apodictic certitude but one of perseverance. The perseverance in our Christian faith is manifested in how we live in and through the struggles of our lives and our faith. Though Thomas doubted the resurrection, he still returned to the upper room with the gathered community of believers. The task for us is to reflect on how we respond to those inevitable moments of doubt and uncertainty in our Christian lives of faith.

As the Easter octave comes to a close today, we are sent forth into the remaining Easter season with the challenge to persist in the good works of faith, living our faith not only in thought and word but also in deed (James 2:14–16), even when we struggle to make sense of what has been handed on to us and find it difficult to recognize God's presence in our lives. †

Thomas the Apostle doubted, as most people do. He still exemplifies holiness and humanizes the saints.



Divine Mercy Sunday

By Rev. Alfred McBride, OPraem

On the Second Sunday of Easter of the Jubilee Year 2000, at the Mass for the canonization of Sr. Faustina Kowalska, Pope John Paul II proclaimed to the world that the first Sunday after Easter, "from now on throughout the Church, will be called 'Divine Mercy Sunday.'"

In Psalm 118, we sing a comforting sentence three times for emphasis: "His mercy endures forever." The Gospel begins with the risen Christ appearing to the apostles on Easter night, calming them and giving them "Peace." He fills them with joy, breathes on them, and charges them with these words: "Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." Christ gives his apostles the power of God's mercy for the sinner: the gift of forgiving sins from God's always-full treasury of mercy. With these words, Jesus gives us the gift of the sacrament of reconciliation (confession). We can choose to accept or refuse his present. Please, accept it. †

In Psalm 118, we sing a comforting sentence three times for emphasis: "His mercy endures forever."



Lord Jesus, when we are tempted to doubt that good triumphs over evil, that life is stronger than death, fill us with faith and hope, we pray. Amen! Alleluia!

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

April 17–22

Monday, Easter Weekday:

Acts 4:23–31 / Jn 3:1–8

Tuesday, Easter Weekday:

Acts 4:32–37 / Jn 3:7b–15

Wednesday, Easter Weekday:

Acts 5:17–26 / Jn 3:16–21

Thursday, Easter Weekday:

Acts 5:27–33 / Jn 3:31–36

Friday, Easter Weekday:

Acts 5:34–42 / Jn 6:1–15

Saturday, Easter Weekday:

Acts 6:1–7 / Jn 6:16–21

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