

8th April 2018 (2nd Sunday of Easter, Year B)

Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 117(118):2-4,15-18,22-24; 1 John 5:1-6; John 20:19-31.

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe!

We live in a world that seeks physical proof before it accepts the knowledge and information being presented. We require evidence before we believe. As we can see from today's gospel reading, there is some type of precedent to this seemingly sceptical approach. People who seek to base their belief on empirical proof have a precursor and a patron saint in the apostle Thomas, the twin.

The resurrection stories in the gospels give us different models of belief and unbelief. We have Mary Magdalene and the other women, Peter and the beloved disciple, the disciples on the way to Emmaus, Thomas.... What does it mean to believe? What does it take to accept the truth that Jesus is indeed Lord and God?

The disciples had travelled with Jesus for a period of three years; they had heard his teachings and his promise that he will rise from the dead, yet they were still doubtful and fearful. The gospel itself is written by a disciple who believes that Jesus is a risen Lord and God, this is information that we are given at the opening of this gospel, but the author also lets us know that belief is not automatic.

Thomas is not with the other disciples when Jesus stands in their midst on Easter Sunday. These disciples have the privilege of having personally witnessed Jesus' presence and acknowledged that he is the same one who was crucified, he showed them his hands and his feet! Thomas challenges them and wants to check for himself.

Unlike Thomas, today we cannot ask to put our finger into Jesus' marks of the crucifixion. The gospels have been written by people who have believed in Jesus as Lord and God in order to help us also come to that faith. Jesus blesses us who come to faith without the need of seeing and touching the risen Jesus.

The journey of Thomas from unbelief to faith is interesting; doubt is already a sign of a willingness to engage. I doubt because I am interested; a person who does not care at all does not doubt but ignores the issue. Like Thomas we often struggle with our faith because we want to participate in this great mystery of God in our midst.

Trust is a gift we live and share every day of our life. Do you trust that your friend or partner really loves you? What proof do you have of this? Our relationship is based on faith in each other. When Thomas sees Jesus he declares: My Lord and my God! We do not see Jesus physically as Thomas did, but we do see him in the love and care our sisters and brothers share with us. At different points in the gospel according to John we have people who declare their faith in Jesus as true God. Am I able to throw myself at Jesus and like Thomas declare: My Lord and my God? This is the invitation Thomas throws at us today; this is the invitation the gospel story throws at us. Those who have gone before us have believed, do I want to participate in their journey too?

Fr Mario