

Easter 2A 2017

Thomas wants to see in order to believe

“Unless I see the marks of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” With these words, Thomas insists that he must *see* Jesus before he will believe. Although the other apostles have told him that Jesus is risen and alive, and although Thomas has heard their witness and testimony, he insists that he must *see* before he will believe.

Blessed are those who have not seen but believe

A week later, Jesus appears to Thomas and invites him to place his finger in the place where the nails pierced his hands and to put his hand into the side where spear had pierced it; and Thomas proclaims, “My Lord, and my God.” But in reply, Jesus asks Thomas, “Have you believed because you have seen me?” And then Jesus pronounces this beatitude: “*Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.*” As wonderful as Thomas’s confession is, the faith of those—your faith and my faith—is greater than the faith of Thomas; for we believe in the risen Christ even though we have not seen him. In the words of today’s second reading from the letter of Saint Peter: “Although we have never seen him, we love him; even though we do not see him now, we believe him”

Why I believe

Allow me to make a personal confession of faith today so that I can testify to you that Jesus Christ is risen and alive. *I have never seen the risen Lord*, but I believe with all my heart and with all my soul that he is risen and alive. *I have never seen the risen Lord*, but I love him with all my heart, with my mind, and with all my strength. I do not believe because I have seen; *I believe* in order to see what is hidden from my eyes. *I believe* because others have testified to me that Jesus is risen and alive. *I believe* because the Word of Scripture testifies that Jesus is risen and alive. *I believe* because I experience the presence of the risen Lord in the Eucharist we celebrate every week.

This faith in the risen Christ is the most precious gift I possess because it allows me to understand what I cannot see. It assures me that God is always present to me.

The faith of the early church

In today's first reading, taken from the Acts of the Apostles, Saint Luke describes the living faith of the early Christians. Those first followers of Jesus who scattered at Jesus' death and were filled with fear were soon gathered into a powerful community of faith. And within that community of faith they lived in a new way, in a way they could not live before. *Through faith* they lived in communion with each other. *Through faith* they lived in communion with the risen Lord. And because they believed, their lives were changed and transformed.

Faith makes all the difference

And so it is with us: faith makes all the difference. Faith in God, faith in Christ, faith in the resurrection changes and transforms our lives because it empowers us to understand what we do not see. This faith is the most precious gift we have. Let us nurture it; strengthen it; and allow it to grow and take possession of our lives. Most importantly, let us proclaim and share this faith with others; for Jesus Christ is risen and alive.