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For Sunday, April 12, 2015

Proof of the Resurrection

This Sunday's Scripture Readings

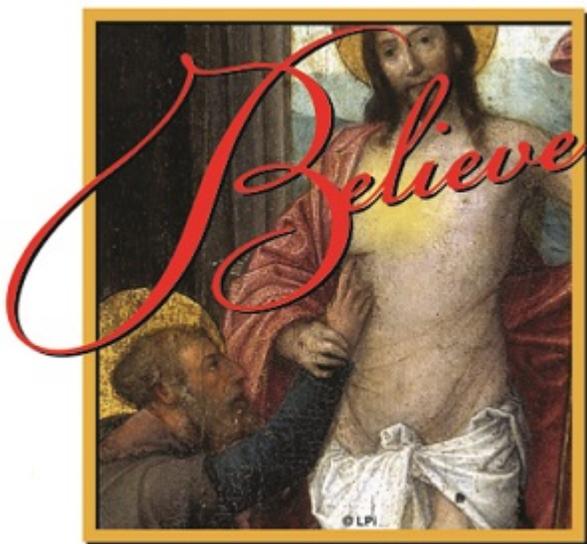
2nd Sunday of Easter or Sunday of Divine Mercy

<http://new.usccb.org/bible/readings/041215.cfm>

Acts 4:32-35

1 John 5:1-6

John 20:19-31



Saint Thomas might just be one of the figures in the New Testament who is the easiest for us to relate to. Like him, we have all had our doubts. We've wondered how we can know for sure that God exists. We've asked ourselves how, with all the Christian denominations, we can feel secure about the one we've chosen. We may have even doubted the bodily resurrection of Jesus, as Saint Thomas did. No matter how pious, we have all entertained doubts at some point in our faith journey.

As well as being the easiest apostle to relate to, Saint Thomas might also be the most envied. After all, Jesus gives him the proof he asks for: "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my

hand into his side, I will not believe." How many of us in our fears and doubts have called up to heaven asking for a sign? Few of us, I imagine, received one so clear and unmistakable as Saint Thomas and the rest of the apostles did one full week after the first Easter.

In the Gospels, Jesus is constantly being asked to give a sign. When he casts out the money changers from the Temple, he is asked to give a sign of his authority to do so. The crowds that jeered him at his crucifixion taunted him to prove that he was the Messiah by coming down from the cross. Hearing these accounts we may wonder why Jesus did not do more to convince the people of his day of his power and divinity, especially at the Crucifixion. In honest moments, we may also ask God why he doesn't do more in our day to make his existence known.

Jesus understood human nature very well. He knew that signs and wonders only work for those who already have faith. As Stuart Chase's quote puts it, "For those who believe, no proof is necessary. For those who do not believe, no proof is possible." We see this reality play out

numerous times in Jesus' ministry. When he casts out a demon, the religious leaders say his powers come from Satan. When he heals the blind man, the religious leaders condemn him as a sinner for performing a miracle on the Sabbath. When he appears to his disciples after rising from the dead, they think they are seeing a gardener, a ghost, or a stranger. Matthew's Gospel tells us that, even at the Ascension, there were disciples who still doubted. Unless we are already disposed to believe, we will make any excuse to deny whatever proofs might appear to us, whether they be miracles or appearances of our risen Lord.

Faith works differently from empirical sciences. In biology or physics, we gather the proofs and then the theory is believed. With faith, we believe and then the proofs present themselves to us. Only with the sight that faith gives can the evidence be understood for what it is.

In Christian iconography, Saint Thomas is often pictured holding a spear. Tradition tells us that he traveled to India to spread the Gospel and was martyred by having his skin peeled off. The one who doubted found enough conviction to lay his life down when it mattered most.

Last week, [gunmen killed 148 students at a Kenyan university](#). Many victims, when asked whether they were Christian, answered "yes" even though they must have known it would mean their death. Like all of us, they had questions about their faith. They doubted and wondered whether God existed. However, when it mattered most, they put their doubts aside and answered from the heart. They were not provided with any more proof than we have been. Yet they believed enough to make the ultimate sacrifice in witness to their faith.

Hopefully, we can do the same when we are called upon to defend our faith or even to step out of our comfort zone to help another human being in need. When we do so, we provide the most powerful proof that the risen Lord is alive and in our midst.

Douglas Sousa, STL

PRAYER

Almighty and ever-living God,
who strengthened your apostle Thomas with sure and certain faith in your Son's resurrection:
Grant us so perfectly and without doubt to believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord and our God,
that our faith may never be found wanting in your sight;
through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
—*Prayer to St. Thomas the Apostle*. Source: <http://www.stthomas.webhero.com/>.

NOTICES

EASTER *URBI ET ORBI* MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS

The Vatican Television Center (CTV) broadcast the Easter Sunday Mass and *Urbi et Orbi* message of Pope Francis; the archived recordings can be found here:

<http://www.pccs.it/tj/telecasts.htm>. To view the full text of the *Urbi et Orbi* message, visit <http://www.news.va/en/news/pope-francis-urbi-et-orbi-message-2>.

CATHOLIC HOME MISSIONS APPEAL

The Catholic Home Missions Appeal takes place on the last Sunday in April, April 26, 2015 (the 4th Sunday of Easter in 2015). Resources for the national collection can be found on the USCCB

website at: <http://new.usccb.org/catholic-giving/opportunities-for-giving/catholic-home-missions-appeal/collection/index.cfm>.

ICSC REGIONAL STEWARDSHIP CONFERENCE, May 2, Savannah

Mark your calendars for the annual International Catholic Stewardship Council Atlanta Province Regional Stewardship Conference, to be held on Saturday, May 2, 2015 at the DeSoto Hilton in Savannah, Georgia. If you will be attending, be sure to stop by and visit LPi. For more information visit <http://www.4LPi.com/resources/events-and-conferences>.

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