

3. July 2023

**Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle
Not seeing and yet believing**

Jn 20: 24-29

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, 'We have seen the Lord,' but he answered, 'Unless I can see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.' Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you,' he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Do not be unbelieving any more but believe.' Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him: You believe because you can see me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.

“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.”

With this meaningful word the Lord also addresses us people of today who do not see Jesus with our bodily eyes and yet believe. Sometimes we might be tempted to think that we are at a disadvantage compared to the disciples who were allowed to see the Lord. However, today's text tells us something different; it becomes a great blessing and merit for us to believe without seeing. So it is good to call on the Lord again and again: *“Increase our faith”* (Lk 17:5).

The apostle Thomas remained unbelieving in the testimony of the other disciples and wanted to convince himself concretely through his own experience. However, faith is a supernatural virtue and is not primarily formed by one's own experience. It is a gift of God which we have to receive and cultivate. The testimony of the other disciples should have been enough for Thomas to believe in the resurrection of the Lord. The Lord had foretold them (cf. Mt 17:23)! But we see that the other disciples also had difficulty believing the testimony of Mary of Magdala about the Resurrection (cf. Jn 20:18; Lk 24:11).

The Lord rebukes His disciple Thomas in a very fine way. He answers his desire to touch Him so that he can convince himself. At the same time, however, He also gives

him a teaching that makes the lack of his mind clear to him. He makes Thomas understand that he is still searching for Him in a human way and Jesus gives us with his words a clear direction for our way with Him.

We are called to listen to the testimony of the apostles, which is given to us through the Holy Scriptures and the teaching of the Church. He who is of the truth hears the voice of the Lord in it.

To believe, therefore, we do not need to be eyewitnesses of certain events ourselves. The light of faith can be communicated to us through the message of other people. In their authentic message the Lord communicates Himself and awakens faith in us. Those who seek proof of the correctness of faith will probably have to go a long way round. The Lord will certainly answer them if they ask sincere questions. But the most direct and fruitful way is to simply open the heart and let the light of faith enter.

Today many people find it difficult to simply trust the testimony of others. There are too many voices and impressions, too many offers of this world that can confuse them. This makes it all the more important that we, as those who follow the Lord, give a clear testimony through our lives and through our word. Faith can grow within us and become deeper, so that our testimony becomes more convincing. With the apostle Thomas we confess: “Jesus, You are my Lord and my God”.