

23. April 2025

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN

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

Jn 20:24-29

Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe.” Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing.” Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.”

It was not enough for Thomas to hear the testimony of the other disciples to believe in the resurrection. He wanted proof to convince himself. Some may justify and identify with Thomas' attitude. But Jesus is not on their side. Even though the Lord granted Thomas' wish and allowed him to touch His wounds to be convinced, He clearly rebuked him.

Time and again in the Gospel accounts we see the Lord rebuking unbelief and expecting us to have firm faith. Not for nothing does He say: “*All things are possible to him who believes*” (Mk 9:23) and: “*If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you*” (Mt 17:20).

Jesus is even displeased when the disciples are unable to cast out a demon because of their lack of faith: “*O faithless and perverse generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?*” (Mt 17:17)

Faith, as a theological virtue, is the bridge and the supernatural light through which God communicates Himself to us, since we cannot yet contemplate Him face to face.

Moreover, He comes to our aid with various signs that confirm our faith. In this way it is easier for us to assimilate the reality of God in our lives and to accept His invitation to go out to meet Him. In fact, at the time of Jesus, many people believed in Him because of the signs He performed. This is still the case today.

However, if we do not welcome the light that God grants us and do not want to read the signs that He gives us, we run the risk of hardening our hearts. Jesus had to face closed hearts, especially among the religious leaders of His time. Some of them had become so closed that they did not even recognise the obvious signs of His divine authority, but used them to persecute Jesus. They went so far as to demand that Pilate crucify Jesus after the Sanhedrin had decided to condemn Him to death for blasphemy.

Even if the refusal to accept faith does not necessarily lead to such excesses, it still denies the person who does not want to believe access to the life of grace and thus to all that our heavenly Father wants to bestow on human beings through faith.

The person who has already accepted faith, on the other hand, needs to strengthen it more and more so that God can fill him with what He has prepared for him and work through him. While the unbeliever has not yet found the door to true life, the believer has already passed through it and must now walk in that faith. *“All things are possible to him who believes”*. These words of the Lord show us that God wants to make us sharers in His authority. Faith has opened the door through which God wants to enter and remain in us. In this way He can communicate His divine life to us, and the stronger our faith, the better He can do so.

In this context, it is clear that the Lord did not praise Thomas because he wanted proof and did not believe the testimony of the other disciples. Even when he made his wonderful confession: *“My Lord and my God”*, Jesus' response was restrictive: *“Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.”*

Thus the Lord teaches us not to seek proof of our faith, but simply to open ourselves to the supernatural light He gives us. We do not have to see to believe. He even tells us that blessed are those who have not seen and have believed. So let us ask the Lord to give us a strong faith and let us do everything in our power to consolidate it.