

2nd Sunday of Easter (B)

Divine Mercy Sunday

April 8, 2018

Blessed are you who have not seen, but believe

Sometimes when we hear a familiar story we don't listen too well because we have heard it countless times before. Kids, it's like those stories that we parents tell time and time again which seem to illustrate every point we wish to make. Or the middle aged man retelling the story of how he caught the pass to personally and apparently single handedly win the ever illusive state championship... or the preacher who repeats the same "shtick" week after week going for a cheap laugh, or the "selfie" homily where the message is more about him than the Scriptures.

When we hear those stories time and time again... everyone but the story teller can hear the almost audible... click... that goes off in the ears of the hearers.

Today's Gospel might tempt us to do that because we hear the doubting Thomas story every year and maybe we can recite the story and the dialogue ourselves because we think that we know it so well.

How about if I told you that what we heard today really wasn't that much about Thomas but more about Jesus and more about us... here in North Dallas in 2018? Might you be more attentive to the story?

Jesus asks Thomas if he came to believe because he had seen... and then adds...blessed are they who believe but have not seen... that's you and me. Jesus is speaking directly to us...right here and right now.... blessed are you in these pews who believe.

In the Gospel St. John tells us that the whole purpose of his writing, that is the whole purpose of Scripture, is that we may come to believe.

Believe what?

Believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you might have life in his name. To believe not just intellectually... but believe viscerally... to believe deep in our gut... with every fiber of our being.

What we recently experienced during Holy Week is what we believe... the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus... was for the forgiveness of our sins. The Good News to which we frequently refer... the central belief of our faith... that our sins are forgiven through the redeeming actions of Jesus Christ... is not just a Holy Week reminder... but is reinforced week after week as the scriptures unfold and the Eucharist is celebrated so that we may come to believe in Jesus Christ and have life in his name.

After the resurrection Jesus appeared selectively to the Apostles and others and in these encounters he spoke, ate, showed his nail marks and as in today's Gospel allows himself to be touched to prove that he is really the one who lived with them, was crucified and died and was raised. The

Apostles came to believe because of their personal encounter with Jesus and the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Others come to believe through the witness given by the Apostles.

The witness of the Apostles produced a community of believers that was of one heart and mind... there was no needy person among them and each received according to their needs. The witness of the Apostles led the followers of Jesus to believe in Him and in believing in him they were compelled to action among their brothers and sisters.

Belief in Jesus Christ is a gift and it is personal. We come to believe through personal encounter and witness. The scriptures and the sacraments are our privileged encounter with Christ and what we do with our encounter is the witness we give to others.

What we have received through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus... divine mercy and forgiveness... we must pass on to all others.

How... through your witness... will others come to believe in the redeeming actions of Jesus Christ?

How will others experience the divine mercy of God through you?

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