

2nd Sunday of Easter (C)
April 11, 2010

May we pray to be given the grace and the strength to believe without always having to have to see.

This is how I ended my homily for Easter just last week and considering our readings, I think it's a perfect place to pick-up on for this Sunday's homily.

In our Gospel, Thomas demands for a sign of the risen Lord in order to believe that he has indeed been raised from the dead.

“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.”

For Thomas, he was not ready to believe without having to have to see.

In fact, he needed to see...he demanded to see for himself the nailmarks and the hole in Jesus' side before he would even consider believing.

How many times have we been there ourselves?

Just last week, we celebrated Easter – the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, from the dead.

This is the same resurrection that promises us freedom from sin and death and grants us everlasting life in the heavenly kingdom.

What's more is that Jesus promises us that because he rose from the dead he would be with us forever until we are one with him and His Father in heaven.

This is what we believe and what we celebrated in a very special way just last week – 7 days ago.

How many of us are still seeking a sign from God...proof of His existence...proof of His love for us?

How many of us find ourselves still saying:

- God, if you cure my cancer, I'll believe in you and go to Church.
- God, if you love me, you'll make my kids love me and obey me.
- God, bring me back my ex-spouse and then I'll know you are there.
- God, help me get my job back or find a new job, then I'll know you love me.
- God, help me pass my test.
- God, free me from my pain or addiction and I'll be the best Christian ever.

How many of us find ourselves saying, "God if you do this or that for me, then I'll know you exist...then I'll know you love me...then I'll know you care. Just show yourself to me and I'll believe."?

"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 does Jesus respond to this type of demand on himself?

What is it that he does for Thomas as well as for the other disciples?

"Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, 'Peace be with you....do not be unbelieving, but believe.'"

Jesus does not reprimand his disciples, including Thomas, for leaving him at his most difficult hour and then not believing that he was raised from the dead as he said he would be.

He does not scold them or yell at them or get angry with them...at least not in John's Gospel.

No. Rather, Jesus kindly and gently offers them peace and with that, forgiveness, mercy, and love.

Jesus wants us to believe...but, he wants us to do so without having to have to see.

He calls us to have faith and "not be afraid" as we hear in our Second Reading from Revelation.

In order to make sure that our faith is steadfast and that we are strong, we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit: "He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"

And with the Holy Spirit, we are given the strength and the ability to be a disciple of Jesus Christ: someone who isn't afraid to spread the Good News throughout the world...someone who's willing to be a witness for Christ...someone who's ready to sacrifice his/her own wants and die to self so that others may live.

The Holy Spirit helps us do all this and more...especially to be able to believe without having to have to see.

And so, the question before us is: are we ready...are we up for the challenge to believe / to have faith without constantly needing God to prove His existence and love for us through signs and demands that we place upon Him?