

Divine Mercy Sunday, April 11, 2010, Cycle C

Doubting Thomas....that moniker has marked anyone who has ever been skeptical of anything... and has left somewhat of an **undeserved** bad mark on the reputation of one of the Twelve Apostles.

Thomas was a great and important Apostle. Did you know He was **perhaps** the only Apostle who went outside the Roman Empire to preach the Gospel. He also crossed the largest area, which includes Persia, India and China. He is the Patron Saint of Architects and of India...yet he had doubts.

Now before I go on, I want you to know that doubt **can** be a good thing.

- it can keep us safe and free from errors in actions and thought.
- It can even be helpful in discerning our own faith or certain aspects of the faith

And while faith does not depend on proofsif our faith has not had concrete, positive effects in our lives, that is, if it has not been proven to ourselves, it would be very difficult in our wounded human nature to hold tight to it.

(PAUSE)

We are tempted to criticize Thomas for wanting proof, but honestly...wasn't he just asking for what the others already had, some form of proof of the impossible?

Hadn't they claimed to see the same wounds he asked to touch?

(Longer PAUSE)

It was not his doubt that made Thomas so great an Apostle, but rather his doubt that had been **transformed to** great hope in an encounter with the Risen Jesus.

The encounter was so blessed, so intense and so deeply personal that he was able to make one of the greatest statements of faith recorded in the Scriptures, "My Lord and my God".

Jesus does not condemn Thomas for his desire of proof.

In fact he **mercifully** gives him the very proof he asks for.

(PAUSE)

We have not seen or touched the Glorified Jesus in the room with the other Apostles, but we have **seen** and **touched** Him none-the-less.

(PAUSE)

At Baptism, our eyes and ears, hearts and minds were opened to the gift of faith.

Faith is the **merciful** gift and loving **action** of God.

In fact it is his **mercy** that we rejoice in today, on Divine Mercy Sunday, because, as sinners, we are so very undeserving of any good from God.

And yet that is what he gives us in super abundance!

Good and love and forgiveness and redemption and salvation and grace and mercy... are rightly ordered to each other in such a way that God cannot give one without showering us with the others.

And he **allows** us to encounter Him.....

- We **see** Him, **touch** Him, **taste** Him in the Holy Eucharist.
- We **hear** Him in the Living Word and hopefully, even in the Homily proclaimed at each Mass.
- We **behold** him in our Priest as he stands in the very **person** of Christ to consecrate the Eucharist with his consecrated hands.
- We **smell** Him in the heady aroma of his Precious Blood.
- We **hear** him speak sweet words of healing and encouragement and forgiveness through our priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

And if we take just a moment to look around us, with open eyes and willing hearts, we can **see** and **touch** and **hear** the mystical body of Christ gathered here today.

Nothing is missing of Jesus among us. Not even His sacred wounds.

(SHORT PAUSE)

My Friends, if we are to fully be a part of the Body of Christ we **must do** as Thomas did, at Jesus' own gentle command.....we must touch His wounds.

Christ's wounds are in **us** and **everyone we know and have yet to meet**.

Because of the fall of Adam, we are all wounded.....and waitinglonging.... to be touched.

Perhaps the only authentic way we have to touch the nail marks, the only way to place our hands into His side is to enter into another person's life.

I pray we do this with the same reverence and awe and joy and fear and even trembling that Thomas must have felt when He touched our Blessed Savior's wounds.

(PAUSE)

We **most often** touch His wounds in things and moments that seem smaller, but they are as big as the sky.

- When we listen to our child who just had their heart broken.
- When we hold the hand of our spouse, at just the right time.
- When we honor our parents.
- When we simply listen to our neighbor, co-worker and friends sincerely and with a loving heart.

- When we stand in solidarity with those among us who have lost their jobs or homes
- or the immigrant who had to leave family behind to try to earn enough money to support that same family.
- When we weep with those who weep, suffer with those who suffer and yes, celebrate with those who have found reason to celebrate.
- When we extend mercy.... work for even the smallest justice... and fight for those who cannot defend themselves.

THAT.....that is when we touch the wounds of Christ! THAT is when Christ becomes so very real, so very close and personal to us, that we can proclaim in a way that convinces **ourselves** and all those we encounter.... that the Risen and Living Jesus Christ is our Lord and our God.