

First Reading – Acts 2:42-47: The early Christian community was devoted to apostolic teachings, fellowship, sharing meals, and prayer. United, they shared resources, sold possessions to support the needy, and worshiped together, growing daily in number and favor.

Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 118: Israel, Aaron’s descendants, and those who fear the Lord proclaim His steadfast love forever. In distress, He frees and strengthens us. The rejected stone becomes the cornerstone.

Second Reading – 1 Peter 1:3-9: We’re reborn into a living hope and imperishable inheritance through Christ’s resurrection. Our faith, tested by trials, is precious and will bring praise at Christ’s revelation. Unseen, He is loved, believed in, and brings us inexpressible joy.

Gospel – John 20:19-31: In a locked room, the resurrected Jesus appeared to his disciples, offering peace and showing his wounds, which brought them joy. He empowered them with the Holy Spirit and the authority to forgive sins. Thomas, absent initially, doubted their testimony. Later, Jesus appeared again, inviting Thomas to touch his wounds, leading to Thomas’ declaration of faith. Jesus blessed future believers who wouldn’t see yet believe. These events were recorded to affirm faith in Jesus as the Christ.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Today’s Gospel highlights the faith of an Apostle—both before and after his encounter with the Risen Lord. The figure of Saint Thomas the Apostle mirrors the various attitudes toward faith that we hold today: Some demand to see before they believe; some believe because the evidence is undeniable; and some believe without having seen.

1. Believing Only After Seeing.

It could be said that Thomas represents, first and foremost, the empirical scientist—one who insists that everything be subjected to experimentation and verification. He belonged to the group of the “hard-hearted”; even though all his fellow disciples of Jesus testified to the event, he still refused to believe. For him, truth was not something unseen, nor was it a matter of following the majority; rather, it was a reality to be personally witnessed through the senses. Thomas’s failing lay in the fact that, despite an entire community of fellow disciples—every single one of whom testified to having seen the Master risen—he adamantly refused to believe. Thus, he not only withheld his faith from the Lord but also withheld his trust from his brethren; he was the type of person who was self-absorbed and lived in isolation from the community. He trusted no one, placing his faith only in that which was “*absolutely undeniable*.” It was an attitude characterized by deep skepticism and a constant fear of being deceived by others. Perhaps this was because the other disciples had already been granted the privilege of seeing the Lord; Thomas, too, desired that same honor—if it were at all possible. Moreover, he sought evidence far more concrete than the mere descriptions offered by his brethren. He wanted to see with his own eyes and touch with his own hands. The Gospel portrays his attitude in this manner precisely to affirm that the Apostles’ faith in the Lord’s Resurrection was grounded upon foundations of absolute certainty.

In a sense, we, too, resemble Saint Thomas of old; the scientific spirit of our modern age compels us to re-examine every issue—to critique, analyze, experiment, and verify—before we are willing to accept it as truth. Consequently, within the realm of faith, we demand logical and verifiable arguments—much like scientific

facts—only to end up doubting, and even rejecting, the revealed truths that the Church has authoritatively defined. It must be acknowledged that science has bestowed upon humanity a wealth of knowledge regarding the cosmos and the nature of human existence, yielding thousands of new discoveries beneficial to modern life—achievements that people of previous centuries could neither imagine nor attributed solely to divine powers. Yet, science remains forever incapable of explaining the ultimate destiny of human life beyond death, or of unraveling the profound wonders of the universe. Only faith, grounded in divine revelation, can provide answers to these mysteries. Indeed, scientific truths are those realities accessible through empirical verification within the material realm. Truths of faith, conversely, pertain to the supernatural realities that physical senses cannot perceive, but which are known solely through divine revelation and the inner apprehension of truths capable of leading humanity to salvation. Truths of faith rest upon the authority of Christ's Word, the credibility of the Apostles, and the authoritative definitions of the Church. Science can transform only the external, material world; faith, however, transforms the internal, spiritual world within each one of us.

2. Seeing and Believing

The Gospel recounts that when Jesus appeared—on this occasion in the presence of Thomas—it was Thomas whom the Lord first needed to admonish regarding his skepticism. Thomas fell to his knees and made his profession of faith: "My Lord and my God!" All his doubts vanished; he embraced the full reality of the situation and acknowledged Christ—the One who had died yet was now alive again. His presence—a presence imbued with both love and authority—strengthened Thomas's faith and utterly transformed the man he was. We may not agree with Thomas's attitude of doubting God and his fellow brothers, but we must wholeheartedly welcome his confession of faith. Now that he has encountered the Risen One, Thomas no longer merely sees the Teacher he knew in the past, raised back to life; rather, he becomes the very first person to believe that his Teacher is God and his Lord.

This means that having encountered the Risen One, Thomas acknowledges his Teacher as Lord and as God—no longer simply as an ordinary teacher. While the other disciples had merely told him that they had seen the Teacher risen, Thomas now encounters God Himself—his very own Lord. Through this encounter, Thomas is completely transformed; he is no longer a withdrawn individual isolating himself from the community. Instead, he places his trust in his fellow disciples and, together with his brothers, receives the "breath of the Spirit" and the mission to go forth and proclaim the Gospel. In the realm of faith, we must actively seek and delve deeply in order to cultivate a steadfast faith. Yet, that is merely the first step. For possessing faith alone is insufficient; what is far more important is "to live" that faith. In other words, is our faith strong enough to transform our lives and, indeed, to change us as individuals? To achieve this, there is no better way than to live in close union and intimate communion with Christ. This very communion—which, in days gone by, transformed the disciples from being ignorant, confused, cowardly, and fearful individuals—enabled them to gain a profound understanding of Gospel doctrine and, above all, to find the courage to proclaim and bear witness to that Gospel.

Drawing from the hard-heartedness of Thomas, we understand better today that faith is not a monolithic element, but rather a synthesis of divine grace and human effort—an interplay involving both the community and the individual. Relying solely on divine grace carries the risk of falling into an attitude that attributes everything to God, thereby deeming any further inquiry or deeper understanding unnecessary. Conversely, relying exclusively on human reason poses a different risk: the tendency to limit one's knowledge of reality to the standards of sensory experience or deductive reasoning—rejecting anything that cannot be understood, measured, or physically

touched. Furthermore, relying solely on the community introduces yet another risk: a passive attitude. While such an attitude may appear outwardly docile, it is, in reality, a sign of superficial faith.

3. Believing Without Seeing

When the Lord said, *"Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed,"* His words could not have saddened Thomas. For Thomas belonged to the generation of the Apostles—those who had both seen and believed. Who would dare claim that such a generation was not blessed? They were blessed because they had seen and believed—even while many others who also saw failed to believe. Faith is not grounded solely in what has been seen. Thus, since Thomas had both seen and believed, he was already blessed. That particular statement was no longer directed at him, but rather toward the readers of the Gospel and toward all of us. We do not belong to the generation that saw with their own eyes; yet, because we believe, we are indeed among the blessed. We are blessed because we have received this gift from God—for faith is, ultimately, a divine gift. *"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed"*—this is a true beatitude, the ultimate blessing. For one cannot physically behold the most sublime realities of God; only faith can lead us there. That is true happiness. Faith can only bear fruit when the decisive factor—God's grace—is present, enveloping the entire journey from its inception to its completion. Thomas's desire seemed paradoxical, yet it was refined by Jesus; ultimately, when he offered his profession of faith, he was simultaneously led into a completely new realm of understanding. Instead of needing to see in order to believe, he realized that one must believe in order to see fully—to see that the Risen One- and the-man Jesus are one and the same; to see that the Risen One is, in the end, his Lord and his God; and to see that faith, transcending all else, becomes true happiness.

"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." These words seem addressed to us—the Christian believers of today—whose faith rests upon the testimony of the Apostles rather than upon sensory experience. Living more than two thousand years removed from the event of the Lord's Resurrection, let us humbly receive the gift of faith. To believe in Sacred Scripture and to believe in the Church—these are our most trustworthy guarantees; there is no other way. Through the grace of faith, we are able to encounter the Lord and draw near to Him. That is true happiness.

The path of our faith today is the path of love. The more we love, the more steadfast our faith becomes. And those who possess a deep love for God often have no need to see in order to believe, for:

It is love that portrays the image of the Eternal One—

A reality, yet profound and deep.

An existence, yet full of mystery.

Ineffable in words yet known through lived experience.

O Lord Jesus, we belong to a generation that has not seen You with mortal eyes, yet we perceive You through the lived experience of faith—through Sacred Scripture, through the Sacraments, and through the Church. We possess faith, yet our faith remains fragile and weak; therefore, we humbly ask You to grant us an increase in faith. Amen.

