

+ J. M. J.

I have always identified with St. Thomas and his need for proof. In fact when I was preparing for my confirmation I wanted to take Thomas as my confirmation name just because I liked this passage in scripture. In the end I took another name. I related this to my spiritual director on my thirty day retreat. We had been working for some time on trust and he looked at me, a 33 year old who waited thirteen years finally to trust God and enter seminary and he asked me if I understood why God was calling me Thomas when I was twelve.

Thomas has some remarkable lines in the Gospel according to John. He proclaims he is going to accompany Jesus to Judea and die with him (John 11:16). Of course he like the others flees. On the third day the Ten come to him with the good news. Put ourselves in that situation. After those tumultuous events would we have been quick to believe on account of the other apostles that this man, Jesus, who was brutally tortured and crucified, has returned to life or would we think they were trying to play a joke. Of course, so it is true that Jesus rose from the dead. That is our faith.

Today the promise Jesus made to St. Thomas is given to us. **“Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”** We did not see the resurrection. We have trusted the accounts of our parents and relatives or someone who was instrumental in bringing us to the faith and most importantly we heard the voice of Jesus in our prayer telling us that it is true. He is alive. He is risen.

Comment [DC1]: Trust in all he reveals to us.

In this reading we as a Church recognize the authority that Jesus gave to his priests to forgive sins.

“Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.” Part of that trust in the risen Lord is trusting that what Jesus came to do is forgive sins. There is not a sin that Jesus cannot and will not forgive. We, however, may be tempted to think that we have done something so bad that God can't possibly forgive me.

Remember what Jesus asked “Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say ‘Rise, pick up your mat and walk?’” Then he commanded the paralytic to walk home. Jesus gives the

apostles authority to forgive sins. Then to hit home the point that they have this awesome authority to free people from the burden of sin they do many signs and wonders. They cure all the sick and those disturbed by unclean spirits. Apparently even the shadow of Peter had healing power.

We refer to this second Sunday after Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday hopefully in an effort for us to understand the depth that God wants to heal and forgive sins. During the Psalm the cantor twice sang God's love endures forever." Perhaps a better translation is "His mercy endures forever." Do we trust that God will forgive our sins if only we ask?

A question I often get is something along the lines of what is my favorite part of priesthood. It by far is the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. It doesn't happen every time; however, there are a good many times where a penitent comes in really hurting. They have never told anyone something serious they have done and they have born guilt since the day they committed that particular sin. They've tried for years to hide the sin and may have done so, but finally they come to that realization that God in his great mercy wants to heal and forgive that very sin. So they come. They are healed and the grace of God rushes upon them.

On this Divine Mercy Sunday let us come to God and acknowledge those areas in our lives where we like Thomas have difficulty trusting in God. Jesus offers us his hands and his side as proof of how much he loves us and is willing to go to heal us. Whenever we do trust in God we are always pleasantly surprised how the divine plan is so much better than what we could have hoped. Trust in Jesus even if it means bringing that thing you've never told a soul to be healed sacramentally in Penance and Reconciliation.

May God bless you.