

Believing and being a true witness to Christ's resurrection

The Christian Creed- the profession of our faith in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and in God's creative, saving, and sanctifying action, culminates in the proclamation of the resurrection of the dead on the last day and in life everlasting. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, CCC no. 988).

Today is the 2nd Sunday of Easter, also called Low Sunday, compared with the previous Sunday- the Sunday of Sundays. Added to this Sunday is the request of St. Pope John Paul II in 2000 that this Sunday is remembered as the Divine Mercy Sunday. In all these, we celebrate the love and mercy of God, very evident in the resurrection of Christ: His victory over death, sin, and Satan. The resurrection of Christ remains the bedrock and the summit of our Christian faith (I Cor. 15: 14-16). Jesus, after His resurrection, took a glorified body. He was beyond the limitations of time and space. Thus, he appeared wherever and whenever he wanted in his tireless efforts to clear the doubts of the resurrection.

The many signs and wonders the disciples led by Peter did after the resurrection of Christ, as we read in the first reading (Acts 5:12-16), were the practical manifestation of the presence of risen Christ among them and to whom they were indeed witnesses. The vision of John, which we read in the 2nd reading, affirms that Christ is the risen one, "the one who lives." The gospel readings within the Easter season will continue to show how Jesus appeared to different people and, at other times to clear the doubts of the resurrection to believers. Jesus knew that the mission of his followers would be grounded in the resurrection.

The Gospel has three central messages: The pouring of peace to the disciples. The commissioning-empowerment with the gift of the Holy Spirit to bind and loose, which is the basis of the Church teachings on the sacrament of reconciliation). The case of Thomas. Let us reflect more on Thomas' case. We may blame Thomas for being doubtful, but we remember that as of that time, the fact of the resurrection was not clear even to other disciples (That is why Peter denied him, Judas betrayed, and the disciples ran away except John, that appeared at the foot of the cross. Even one of the disciples had to run naked to save himself- Mark 14: 51-52). More striking is the humility of Thomas; as soon as he became convinced, he accepted the message whole and went ahead to bear witness to it. He carried the message to India, where he labored and died as a martyr. The Indian Christians trace the origin of their evangelization to him, and the feast day is on July 3.

In our case, the first question is whether we believe in the resurrection? If yes, how do we show it in our lives? Also, learning from Thomas, how do we accept truths demonstrated to us in humility? Do we go-ahead to continue to argue even when there is no need for that? Do we make an effort to ask questions about our faith? Ignorance is a disease. Prophet Hosea laments, "my people perish because of lack of knowledge." (Hosea 4:6). We cannot undermine the importance of knowledge of what we believe. Our Faith formation builds on the information we receive. Let's ask the good Lord to open our hearts and minds to welcome his message in its fullness. Amen.

“Therefore, my beloved brothers (sisters), be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15: 58).