

Reflections

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The Faith of Saint Thomas

The topic of faith is very current today because the world is going through an evident crisis of faith. There exists a slow process of de-cristianization, a paralysis and even an extinction of faith in modern man even in our own ranks.

Today's times flee God. In the best of cases, He is only recognized as an idea. There is no longer a clear concept of the person of God nor of his personal influence before the world and before the happenings of our epoch.

Perhaps it may also happen to us someday that we must confirm: In the background, I no longer believe in what I believed before. My enthusiasm is lost. My religious fervor is lost. And, therefore, we no longer feel very sad about that; we simply confirm it.

Our life of faith, our own spiritual life, has its ups and downs. We have epochs in which everything goes badly, in which it is difficult for us to pray, to confess, to seek God. But, what will happen if these moods are repeated and become lasting?

In all cases, we cannot maintain our faith alive in the cold atmosphere of the modern world without having an authentic spiritual life and without having order in this spiritual life, without having time to meditate and pray, without having time for those who think and struggle as we do.

In this situation, the Church shows us the attitude of Saint Thomas. Thomas is a truly modern man, a realist and an existentialist who only believes in what he can touch, who does not want to live from illusions, who fears he will be deceived: "Unless I see the scars of the nails in his hands and put my finger on those scars and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

What impresses us in the case of Thomas, first, because he is charming and contemporaneous, is the power of his resistance.

The conditions he lays before us for his surrender are very hard. A hardness so terrible can only come from a terrible suffering. He does not want to risk himself again because he has already suffered much, because probably, he has suffered more than the others by the Passion and Death of Jesus.

The response of Jesus to the demands of Thomas is unheard of: Jesus accepts them and is submissive to them: "Put your finger here, and look at my hands, then reach out your hand and put it in my side. Stop your doubting and believe!"

Then Saint Thomas, conquered by all the love and indulgence from Jesus, feels transported to the heights which nobody else has reached and exclaims: "My Lord and my God!" He is the first who reaches this extreme with his faith. Until now, no apostle has said to Jesus: You are my God. From that poor Thomas, sceptible and demanding, Jesus obtains one of the most beautiful acts of faith in the entire Gospel.

And we? We neither see nor touch the Lord like Thomas. Nevertheless, the same thing happens to us: Jesus is with us even and especially amidst our doubt and incredulity to support us and strengthen us.

Our crises of faith are crises of growth and help us to be more adult in our faith, to bring us more and more closer to God. Obstacles are occasions of ascension like the dam which makes the water rise in order to give it new potency.

Because faith is a permanent adventure, a continuous challenge, a long way we have to travel. And when we advance on this way, so much moreso must we take leaps of faith. This is what Saint Peter says in one of his letters: "We have to suffer trials so that our faith may be purified, like gold through fire."

Dear brothers and sisters, let us pray that God makes us mature and grow in our faith. And that our crises of faith are only crises of growth on our journey toward the House of the Father. And let us also ask Mary, Mother of Faith, that She gives us the grace of a firm and profound faith in her Son Jesus, the resurrected Lord.

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