

Reflections

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206 – July 1st, 2018

Incredulity

After the Resurrection of Jesus, the apostles are reluctant. But Thomas goes far beyond that, even closing himself up to the light. The empty tomb has not convinced him. He has not been impressed by the meditations on the Scriptures narrated by the disciples of Emmaus. He wants to see. And when everyone has assured him that they have seen, he wants to go beyond that: not only to touch but to probe the identity of the Crucified by putting his fingers, his hands into the wounds.

Did Thomas not love his Master? Yes, evidently, but he was stubborn, hard of heart. Not only did he want proofs, but he demanded them according to his whim. Jesus is going to lend himself, with admirable complaisance, to the absurd demands. But He will let eight days go by to give a time limit to that incredulity. And then Jesus submits to his conditions with a mixture of irony and realism.

The passing of the days seems to have strengthened his incredulity. But because of it, he does not think of separating himself from his brethren. There is faith deeper than his doubts which continues uniting him to them. This was his salvation: to continue with them in spite of the darkness.

And Jesus now appears only for him. They are all there but the Master goes directly to Thomas: Come, Thomas, *“Put your finger here, and look at my hands; then reach out your hand and put it in my side.”* Now he is completely baffled. His challenge had been nothing more than to ask for impossible things, a means for closing himself up in his doubt.

At least, that was what he believed because when he saw Jesus, when he heard his sweet voice, Thomas realized that, in the background, he had always believed in the Resurrection, that he desired it with all his heart. He realized that he refused to believe it for fear of being fooled about something which he desired greatly.

Jesus led Thomas to the simple joy of believing without dreams and without fears. Therefore he shook when Jesus told him to touch Him. He now felt deep shame for his words of eight days prior.

If he touched, he did not do it now for the need of proofs, but as a penance for his hardness. Overwhelmed, crushed, he fell to his knees and said: *“My Lord and my God.”*

Thus the humiliation led him to **one of the most beautiful prayers in the entire Gospel**. Now, in his faith, he was going where no other apostle had gone. Nobody had ever said before to Jesus: My God.

From that poor Thomas, Jesus has brought forth this most beautiful act of faith. Jesus loved him so much that from this bitterness, from this humiliation He has made a marvelous memory. God knows how to forgive sins in this way. God is the only one who knows how to make from our faults, holy faults which will only remind us of the marvelous tenderness which has been revealed because of them.

Jesus will respond to Thomas' exclamation with a mysterious phrase: *“Do you believe because you see me? How happy are those who believe without seeing me!”* Even before Jesus said it, Thomas was already sure of it. He was aware and was envious of the joy he found in the faces of his companions. He now understood that that which he had ironically judged as a dream was true joy rooted deeply in faith.

His earlier pride was distorted in shame. He shamefully had raised his hand. He was beginning a pilgrimage toward humility. His hand in the side no longer sought proofs, certainties; he did not try to assure himself. That need for security had become absurd. Also, he had begun to discover that the certainties of reason were infinitely weaker than the predictions of faith.

He began to understand that seeing and touching really cleared nothing up and that his love was much more solid than his hands. He understood that his hands contributed nothing which they would not have discovered much earlier and more profoundly, his faith and his heart.

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