

## 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER

Do you believe in unicorns? You don't? What would it take for you to believe in unicorns? What if a poll showed that fifty percent of all Americans believe in unicorns, would that do it? No? What if the person you trust most in the world told you that he or she had seen a unicorn, would that be enough? You might say, "Well, because I trust her, and don't think she would lie to me, I believe she thinks she saw a unicorn." Most of us would not believe it unless we saw it. Yet, even then my guess is that you would assume that it must be a hoax. Someone must have glued the horn onto the head of a horse or that the horse is deformed, but that it is not a real unicorn.

Faith is believing in what you can't see. But in some ways it is also believing what you do see. We know that with computer graphics and technology just because we see something doesn't mean that it is actually so. Thomas the Apostle didn't want to be fooled by the other Apostles or anyone that Jesus is really alive. He sees their jubilation where once they were afraid. He should have believed that what they saw was true. There would be no other reason for their change in attitude. Yet, he tells them that he won't believe it without physical contact.

When Jesus encounters Thomas he knows that Jesus is alive. Yet, he will be asked by Christ to accept on faith that he will have the same power that Jesus had to teach and heal. He will do great things and be sent by the Father, inspired by the Spirit to go to the ends of the world. Then Jesus tells the apostles that they have the power to forgive sins. This too will have to be taken on faith. How can you prove if your sins have been forgiven or not?

I suspect all of us are here because we do believe that Jesus is risen. We believe that Jesus is the Christ. We believe also that Jesus has given the apostles and the Church the power to forgive sins. We also believe that Christ desires that we share in everlasting life. All of those things are believed by Christians. Yet, I am also sure that there have been times when each of these things has come into question. There are many things that we doubt from time to time, even when we know them to be true. I guess it is part of our human nature.

With our faith it is similar. Virtually everything that we know is based on the experience of someone else. We judge that it is true because we believe the apostles, the saints, and others who have gone before us. We also know of many instances where God has been very real to us. All of those cases make us confident that our faith is not in vain. Yet, sometimes we still get bothered with doubts. It might be that we doubt because we don't see the payoff. We don't feel at peace. We have fears. We see sick people die. There is a lot of violence done, even in the name of religion. Maybe our faith has been tested by other Catholics who don't seem to live the faith they profess. It can be hard to believe in those cases.

Today we are asked not only to have the faith of Thomas, but also to be confident like Thomas. We are called to be bearers of light and life to the whole world. We are to be transformed and then transform others. When Peter and the others received their commission the sick were healed, many were baptized, and suffering and persecution would not stop them.

The world has a hard time believing in Christ. It seems that religion is waning in belief and practice in the western world. Maybe it is due in part because we haven't taken the power and authority given us to change the world. Maybe we haven't been the light for others to see so they would know Christ.

There will always be doubts. But, for us who believe we say, "Even if I can't prove everything I do trust that it is true." Blessed are those who believe without seeing. We are blessed indeed to be here this morning. We are blessed to have a God who comes to us in Word and sacrament. We are blessed that our sins have been forgiven and that we are reconciled to the Father. Even if we cannot prove these things we can make our profession of faith with Thomas. We do believe that Jesus is our Lord and God.