

## SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Fr Callistus Khathali - HOMILY : SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER - Divine Mercy Sunday! 24<sup>th</sup> April 2022

John 20:28-29

***Thomas replied, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him: You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.***

The second part of today's gospel (John 20:19-31) takes us to Jesus appearing eight days later to the disciples when Thomas, one of the Twelve was also present. He had appeared before when Thomas was not there. Thomas had earlier on told his colleagues that he will believe only if he put his fingers in his wounds and his hand in his side. As the Lord appeared he called Thomas to do precisely that.

What is more interesting is the reaction of Thomas. He surely did not just see the risen Jesus of Nazareth that he had left everything to follow. He did not just see those wounds that were still fresh. Last Sunday we had Mary Magdalene responding "Teacher" (Rabbuni) upon recognizing the risen Lord! For Thomas it was not that, he did not just see the Teacher or the Master who had a group of his disciples just like other masters and teachers of his time. Thomas made a profession that was never ever made before. When Jesus was in Caesarea Philippi, ***he asked his disciples who people said he was*** (Matthew 16:13-17). After Simon Peter had made a declaration that he was the Christ, Jesus reacted by stating that this was revealed to Simon son of Jonah by the Heavenly Father.

Thomas in today's gospel makes a declaration that Jesus is God through his reply, ***"My Lord and my God."*** This is even more powerful than declaring Jesus as God's anointed one (Christ or Messiah). Jesus had called Thomas to believe, and it was indeed through his faith that the divine identity of Jesus was revealed through him. He had all the physical proof of the Risen Lord right in front of him, He saw him, and even touched his wounds, and yet what he declared was way beyond what his senses could make sense of. Our hymn for benediction written by another Thomas (Aquinas) has the words "praestet fides supplementum sensuum defectui" where faith is called upon to help us see what senses cannot see. Thomas the apostle had this revelation through his faith.

As John concludes this chapter he looks at the issue of faith and its importance to us who read his gospel today (John 20:31). What is written here is to make us believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. Just like Thomas we are called to see beyond Jesus of Nazareth. We actually did not have the privilege of living with Jesus of Nazareth; therefore what we know of him is inspired by our faith in him.

Finally John says that believing in him we may have life through his name. With his suffering, death and resurrection Jesus has restored our life which was ravaged by sin. This was through the immensity of his divine mercy that we celebrate today. It is not just any kind of mercy given to us by any human being, but the mercy from above, given to us by our Lord and God.

**May Almighty God bless you, the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen. I will meditate on the Glorious Mysteries as I pray for your personal intentions. Have a wonderful Divine Mercy Sunday!**

Fr Callistus Khathali