

New Brighton, Sunday 16th April 2023

Low Sunday

“Quia vidisti me, Thoma, credidisti.”¹

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

“Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed.”

An experienced priest used to say, while preaching a retreat to seminarians during Holy Week, that Holy Week, the summit of the liturgical year, was a week to practice the virtue of Faith. Charity between confreres happened to vanish, because of the tiredness of the finishing term, and the attacks of the devil against the bond which unites true Christian brothers. Hope was gone because Our Lord was to die. The only theological virtue left to them was Faith, in the darkness.

I would like to say today, on the octave day of Easter Sunday, that we received throughout this week a comfort in our virtue of Faith. The Church allowed us to live alongside the apostles and disciple the astonishment it was for them to witness the Passion and Death of Christ, and to receive the news that Jesus was risen.

The Gospels of the masses of this Easter week are like flashes of heavenly light. The church presented us with seven apparitions of Our Lord to his disciples. If you carefully read the Gospel of Easter Sunday, we didn't see Him on that very day of His Resurrection: the angels only came to us through the Holy Women to announce He was risen. On Monday, we were in need to recognize Him through the breaking of the bread with the disciples of Emmaus. But before that He had to explain to us again all the Sacred Scriptures, to warm our broken hearts, lost in darkness and sadness: “Was not our heart burning within us, whilst he spoke in this way, and opened to us the scriptures?”²

Then, He ate with us on Tuesday.³ He appeared to us in Galilee, at the sea of Tiberias, on Wednesday.⁴ He consoled us with Mary-Magdalen on Thursday⁵. He came upon the mountain with us on Friday⁶. And yesterday we heard the testimony of the youngest of the apostle, the one Jesus loved, the only one who didn't run away, stood by the Cross with our Holy Mother, and received in a special way the seven last words of Christ dying upon the Cross. This disciple is the first, according to the Gospels, who saw, and believe in the resurrection of Christ: “Then that other disciple also went in [the sepulchre], [...]: and he saw, and believed.”⁷ Today we witness St Thomas the Apostle, who refuse to believe, before seeing Him for real.

This Easter week was given to us to restore our Faith in the Lord, who gave His divine life for us. This virtue of Faith was weakened by the threat of the devils, the world outside who

¹ Jn., XX, 29. Gospel for Low Sunday.

² Luke, XXIV, 32. Gospel for Easter Monday.

³ Luke XXIV, 36-42. Gospel for Easter Tuesday.

⁴ Jn., XXI. Gospel for Easter Wednesday.

⁵ Jn., XX, 11-18. Gospel for Easter Thursday.

⁶ Math., XXVIII, 16-20. Gospel for Easter Friday.

⁷ Jn., XX, 8. Gospel for Easter Saturday.

spent a pagan feast of Easter, neglecting the Lord, forgetting their Easter duties, not seeing that the great mystery of the Redemption was commemorated across the globe, and the sacrifice of the cross renewed everyday upon the altars. We saw Our Lord several times, to be able to profess our Faith, with Mary-Magdalen, St John, who both were with Him on the Calvary as privileged witnesses of His passion and Death, and then, today with St Thomas and the others apostles.

The three theological virtues, like all virtues, are growing, or unfortunately fading together. Jesus knew that seeing Him would restore our Faith, build up our Hope again, and make live anew the life of Charity. But, as a great and patient teacher, who already explained everything, and suffered martyrdom because of it, He said the same things again, all surrounded with the glorious light of the Resurrection.

St Paul said in 1st Epistle to the Corinthians that the Resurrection of Christ was the explanation and the condition for our Faith.⁸ Today, as Christians sons, reborn by the water of Baptism, and the Holy Blood of Christ being poured over us, we ought to proclaim, stronger and louder than ever, that Christ is risen, and saved us from the eternal damnation. This glorious Resurrection, in which we firmly believe from now, is giving an incredible Hope that we will benefit of the same glory too, if we remain faithful to Him, and live from the holy fire of Charity.

To help his act of Faith in his divinity, Jesus asked St Thomas to put his fingers into the marks of the nails, and his hand into his side. Our fingers and hands are now blessed at the sacred contact with the wounds of Our Lord. From now, we can only use them to serve Him only.

“Be not faithless, but believing.”⁹ Everything can be forgiven because we regretted it, and we believed in Him. Let’s live from this life inherited from the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The communion of the mass, which conclude our thanksgiving for this mass and this week of graces, is kindly inviting us to have no doubt anymore about Our Saviour, and that’s the purpose of the soft melody chanting the words of Jesus. We can hear the forgiving voice of Our Lord, full of merciful bounty, who understand the doubt as a good father, but now requests the adhesion of our heart to the Truth he has been preaching all along our journey with Him. Even more than a request, Jesus encourages us to come to Him and believe.

No reproaches were made to St Thomas for not believing before, but since he saw, he adhered with all his heart and flesh and soul to the whole mystery of Faith. Following the example given by the Apostle, let’s move ahead, toward the immense ocean of charity now open in front of our eyes, illuminated by the light of the Faith in the Resurrection of our Lord.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

⁸ I Cor., XV, 14.

⁹ Jn., XX, 27.