



SUNDAY OF THOMAS

“Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

The Lord said these words to His unbelieving disciple, who refused to believe in the Lord’s Resurrection when his fellow apostles told him about this resurrection. The apostles joyfully told Thomas that the Lord had arisen, but Thomas replied: *“Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hands into His side, I will not believe”* (John 20:25). The Lord did not tarry in providing His disciple with the confirmation he desired on the eighth day after His Resurrection. We hear a detailed description of this event in the Gospel reading for this week. Thomas wished for confirmation of the resurrection: he received an incomparably higher confirmation, besides which even the resurrection paled. *“My Lord and my God!”* – Thomas exclaims. Having become convinced of Thy Divinity, I no longer seek to be convinced of the resurrection. For Thee, Omnipotent God, all actions are possible, including those that surpass man’s achievements.

In response to the apostle’s confession, the Lord blessed those who have not seen, yet have believed. He thus remembered us, too, who are separated from that event by time and space. With His words the Lord united the faithful of all times and all places with the apostles. In the prayer which the Lord offered to God the Father before embarking upon His passion, He united the apostles with all true Christians: *“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe in Me through their word”* (John 17:20).

Yet why do we not have faith?

First of all, because we did not make any effort to become acquainted with Christianity, i.e. we did not listen whenever and wherever we had the opportunity to hear something theoretical about Christianity, in order to afterwards unite this theory with practice and thus acquire an effective knowledge of Christianity.

Christianity can be compared to a large and wonderful harbor, into which ships of all sizes and classes can easily enter. Christianity embraces people of all ages, all classes and positions, all abilities and degree of education: *embraces and saves*. Christianity contains both true theology and genuine psychology and metaphysics. Only in Christianity can one acquire a proper understanding of man, of the visible and invisible worlds. The illumination provided by Christianity leads to a formation of the same viewpoint on human learning that is held by God. *“For the wisdom of the world is foolishness before God”* (1 Cor. 3:4), because this knowledge deals only with what is temporal and worldly, and leads its possessor to vanity, pride, self-deception, forgetfulness of God and eternity. When such a person begins to ponder spiritual subjects, his mind wanders around as in a valley of shadows; being unable to acquire true knowledge, he begins to make up opinions and ideas, dressing them up in artfully complex words, and deceiving both himself and others.

Even a most superficial glance at the establishment and the spread of Christianity leaves us dumbfounded. We can immediately see that Christianity is not a human establishment, but a divine establishment. The Lord became incarnate amid worldly poverty. Despite being of royal ancestry (that of the Holy Virgin Mary), He lived in absolute poverty. Setting out to preach His word, He chose for Himself twelve disciples from the same commonplace environment. The disciples were illiterate or semi-literate people. And such individuals were able to become the founders of Christianity! Of Himself the Lord said that He would die a shameful death. Of His followers He said that they would be killed, persecuted, hated by all. In terms of

human reasoning the establishment of Christianity could easily appear to be a matter lacking all sense, a dream issuing from someone's imagination and love of glory.

However, history has shown us just the opposite. Christianity spread precisely as the Lord foretold. The persecutions to which Christians were subjected in the Roman Empire were unimaginable. The Roman emperors tortured and killed more of their subjects than all of Rome's wars. Moreover, the Roman emperors killed more of their soldiers than all the state's enemies. In the middle of the first century the population of the Roman Empire was about 100 million people. By the time of Constantine the Great (A.D. 324) it had gone down to 60 million people.

In the establishment of Christianity who cannot but acknowledge God's will, God's power, God's action, surpassing all the reason and power of man? **The impossible happened.** The inner conviction that comes from a fulfillment of commandments is a conviction that influences the very heart of man. It is more powerful than all outside influences. The Gospel commandments calm the soul, revive and strengthen it.

"Reach hither thy hand, says the Lord to His doubting disciple, and be not faithless, but believing"; begin to act in accordance with My commandments, and you shall see Me by means of an invisible spiritual feeling in your soul. Each one who touches Me in such a manner will become sure of Me and will cry out together with My beloved disciple: **My Lord and my God!** Amen.

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