Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Believing Reliable People   <u>Second Sunday of Easter/C</u>   Divine Mercy   April 28, 2019   Acts 5:12-16;   Rev. 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19;   **Jn 20:19-31**   First Communion
(So I congratulate you on being here today. I hope to see you a lot in the future.)

Boys and girls, what is the reason for the gospel, as the deacon just read? What did he just read? "This is given to you so that"—what? "so that you may believe and have life."

Now the very basis of our Christian faith is that **Jesus was raised from the dead**. As St. Paul says if that were not true, we would have no faith; there would be nothing to it. Now let's admit to think about someone being raised from the dead is astonishing; is it not? Yes, it is astonishing. We shouldn't deny it. We should see how astonishing this is. **Our faith is astonishing. And precisely because of that we may really not really believe it.** Or we may think this way: we will think, well, someday I'll let God explain it to me, which is more or less **like Thomas in today's reading. He says, "I won't believe it until I see the wounds in his hands."**

Now that's being stubborn, and we can be stubborn. People are stubborn. That's part of being human sometimes. But it's not very good because **if you want everything proved to you, you are going to end up very ignorant**, because there is not much you can learn all by yourself. When you go to school you have to assume your teachers know what they are talking about. You can't say, well I'll believe that when I figure it out myself. Well then you will never grow. You will flunk out of school; yes, you will. **You have to believe in somebody**; you see? This is the point: you have to believe is someone.

And Thomas, actually **Jesus was scolding Thomas** today, his apostle, his disciple, scolding, him **because he didn't believe his own friends, who were reliable people.** He knew them well. They were adult, and they were reliable. Now your friends, I don't know. I wouldn't believe your friends completely. They are a little bit, a little green, you might say, right? a little young, right? And that's good. But you need a certain more sort of maturity, certain sort of growth to be

completely reliable. Well the disciples were completely reliable, and yet Thomas didn't believe them. So Jesus was rather miffed at him.

Well, you know, **sometimes we can be like Thomas.** We can think to ourselves, well, I'll believe that when I see it. And unfortunately then we lose out on the most marvelous, beautiful, remarkable, and astonishing mysteries of life. **We cheat ourselves** when we don't believe in the reliable testimony of those that Jesus himself chose as his followers. And **when they tell us that they experienced him raised from the dead in some extraordinary way**, well, that is very reliable, and we can place our faith in it. And when we do, then **we can live with hope, because then we realize death is not the end.** It looks like it is, but it isn't. We could look forward to, after a beautiful life here on earth, or not so beautiful, for some people it's not so beautiful, but after life on earth, whatever it is, we can go on to glory. **The glory of God himself becomes our glory**. **We enter into the heart of our Father, our divine Father.**

And not only that, but when we live in this kind of hope, then our struggles on earth, our daily problems, aren't so big, because **we are not all alone. We are actually part of the body of Christ.** Our spirit is fed by the Holy Spirit to help us get through over every little problem. Every issue, every crisis we have help and, therefore, **we can actually dwell**, not only in our own love but **in the love of God.** What a great opportunity if we take it. You see that? And that's what we are celebrating today, that at least today **you are taking that opportunity to come to the Lord to receive his body, his blood, his soul, and his divinity and to let that begin to transform your life. So I congratulate you on being here today. I hope to see you a lot in the future.**