

**Waiting for Personal Invitation**      Second Sunday of Easter/C      Divine Mercy      April 28, 2019      Acts 5:12-16;      Rev. 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19;      **Jn 20:19-31**      (This is a real temptation for all of us, for all people, to hold off from believing until some personal experience can provide confirmation.)

**“Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.’”**

The encounter between the risen Christ and the disciple Thomas **mirrors the encounter between the risen Christ and countless would-be or might-become disciples throughout time.** It is a lesson about what it means to believe.

Now the term “believe” is often used in our daily speech, but in this Scripture it is endowed with a very special and even extraordinary meaning. **Here to believe refers to an actual, deliberate, and conscious choice to accept a disclosure from God.** The word is not equal to think, suppose, or imagine, as we often use it in our daily speech. Here it is a voluntary commitment to the reality of the resurrection of Christ. And as St. Paul never tires of pointing out, **the resurrection of Christ is divine revelation par excellence, and without it there is no meaningful Christian faith.**

The second point of this story is that **God’s plan for sharing this great mystery with the whole world involves apostles:** that means missionaries, the very idea of mission and therefore **the very idea of Church.** Eventually perhaps every soul will have some direct communication with, communion with God; but the road to this begins with word-of-mouth and belief, the apostles and the apostolic Church sharing the good news person to person. Jesus embarrasses Thomas and corrects him because he was not willing to listen and to believe his own friends, whom he should have trusted, whom he knew to be reliable witnesses. And **this is a real temptation for all of us, for all people, to hold off from believing until some personal**

**experience can provide confirmation.** This is being unbelieving, and Jesus scolds Thomas for it. Sadly, the world is still full of Thomases who are withholding their belief in God's self donation, God's self disclosure, until such a time as they may have their own personal epiphany, their own personal experience of God's presence or revelation. **This is a very false and wrong kind of pride.** There are good kinds of pride; there are bad kinds. This is a bad kind of pride, to wait for a personal invitation from God. And it's unfortunate because it obstructs the kind of life and growth that God is trying to promote. For whatever reason, **God has made us interdependent, not independent.** Of course in our culture independence is a real favored value, but it isn't God's value.

God's value is interdependence, and thus we have the Church in which the body of Christ is made up of many members all of whom depend on each other. And that is the very meaning of our Baptism. **We are baptized as members of each other with Christ as our head.** And by the way, **those who are graced with profound and personal revelations,** like St. Paul, are for that very reason **impelled to spend their entire lives in nothing but service to the gospel.** So I wonder how many people who are waiting for their personal invitation realize the great cost that it will require from them. Meanwhile many people waste an enormous amount of time dithering, waiting for a personal invitation when God's saving truth has been available all along.