

**Seeing Signs**     St. Thomas, apostle     Wednesday, July 3, 2019     Eph 2:19-22;     **Jn 20:24-29**     (The nature of a sign is it may or may not be interpreted as a sign, as leading somewhere else.)

**“Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”**

This gospel story is exploring the relationship between seeing and believing; it’s not obvious. Paul says, “We walk by faith not by sight.” So there are **two levels you could say of perception: the level of the sight, the sensory world; and the world of faith that is not sensory.** But these two worlds are not completely separate; **they are connected, and the nodules of connection are called signs.**

Jesus was angry at some of the crowd because they said, “Show us a sign.” The reason he was angry was that he had already showed them many signs. **But the nature of a sign is it may or may not be interpreted as a sign, as leading somewhere else.** That’s what a sign does; a sign points to something else. A sign in this case points to the transcendent reality.

Now here Thomas sees the risen Christ in a bodily form. He sees that, but **he now goes through that sign to the transcendent reality of “My Lord and my God.”** He didn’t see Lord and God; he saw the risen Christ that is a sign of the transcendent reality of the Creator and the sustainer of all life, as well as the Savior and Redeemer of all creation. **But seeing a sign doesn’t mean we will actually see it as a sign,** which is the problem with those people following Jesus after the multiplication of the loaves. Again, Jesus was angry because he said, “You are not following me because you saw the sign, but because you had your fill of the loaves.” Of course the loaves were the sign, but they didn’t see it as a sign of some transcendent feeding. **They didn’t see it as a sign of God’s desire to fill them with God.** They only saw the loaves. Well the loaves in themselves are not a sign.

Similarly with our **sacraments:** we use bread and wine, which are signs of a transcendent reality: the body, the blood, the soul, and the divinity of Christ. **Well a person could see the bread as bread, but not as a sign of the transcendent reality of Christ.** So this is always in play, and in fact our lives are full actually of signs. The question is **do we see them as signs, or do**

**we just take them as objects of sense**, like looking at the host as an object of sense instead of as a sign of God's body, blood, soul, and divinity?

The same goes on in physics. There are scientists, **a few, who have analyzed all the incredible probabilities and improbabilities that have led to us being here on earth**, and they say, you know, **we are only here on earth because of a series of completely improbable occurrences. The exact strength of gravity**: if it were a little stronger or weaker, well we wouldn't be here. The nature of water: water is very unusual because frozen water floats. Most frozen things don't float in the medium of which they are a frozen reality, a solid reality. Most solids sink in their medium. **Ice floats**. If it weren't for ice floating, there would be no life on earth.

So of course water now is a sign of the miraculous nature of life, hidden from the senses and even hidden from reason, except through the extraordinary improbable nature that it manifests, and on and on and on. There are many of them, many coincidences, **many improbabilities that happen to be true**, and because they are true, here we are. **If one of them were missing, we wouldn't be here. Those are all signs of the transcendent power of God creating**. And yet many people, supposedly of reason, of science, of knowledge, completely miss it. They don't see. They see, but they don't see. They see on one level: object of their senses, but **they don't understand these objects as indicating something that transcends**.

So **Thomas is the apostle of faith** in this sense that he went through **the experience of doubting everything so that he could be re-oriented through metanoia**, through conversion to becoming a true believer, not only someone who acknowledged the risen body of Christ, but recognizing Jesus as Lord and God.