

2nd Sunday of Eastertide (A)

19th April 2020

'Jesus, I Trust in You'

Acts 2: *the whole community remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles.*

Ps 117: *This day was made by the Lord ...* 1Pt 1: *You did not see Him, yet you*

love Him ... Jn 20: 19–31: *Doubt no longer but believe!*

On this 2nd Sunday of the Easter season, today, a number of things coincide: we have the Sunday Gospel recounting the doubting of St Thomas the Apostle on the day of the Lord's Resurrection, and his coming to faith a week later; but it's also 'Divine Mercy' Sunday, when we celebrate the devotion promoted by the Polish nun of the 20th c., St Faustina. I think that we can draw a lot of lessons for this challenging time by reflecting on St Thomas and on St Faustina ... summed up by that phrase that is always inscribed at the base of the Divine Mercy image, "Jesus, I trust in You."

We always hear the Gospel about St Thomas a week after Easter (every year, whichever cycle of readings we're on A/B/C), as it highlights both the challenge of this astonishing belief in the Resurrection, and also the necessity of it, and the firm foundation of this faith in the actual, historical event, and the visible evidence seen by the

apostles. In fact, it is sometimes said that St Thomas's *doubting* helps us more than if he had straightaway believed! Pope St Gregory the Great put it beautifully when he said, [preaching to his people](#) some 1,400 yrs ago:

"What conclusion, dear brethren, do you come to? Surely it was not by chance that this chosen disciple was missing in the first place? Or that on his return he heard, that hearing he doubted, that doubting he touched, and that touching he believed? It was by divine dispensation and not by chance that things so fell out. God's Mercy worked wonderfully, for when that doubting disciple touched his Master's wounded flesh he cured the wound of our disbelief. His scepticism was more advantageous to us than the faith of the disciples who believed. Inasmuch as he came to believe by actually touching we can lay aside all doubt, for our faith is made whole. So this doubting disciple, who actually touched, became a witness to the reality of the resurrection." (Hom. 26)

St Thomas, then, becomes for us a wonderful model of being able to 'Trust in the Lord.' He came to see that he could indeed trust in Jesus, give His whole life to the Lord, without any more doubts. The Resurrection was real, true, beyond doubt. Therefore his whole life could be anchored in that act of trust, expressed in those famous words of faith as he fell to his knees before Jesus: "My Lord and My God!"

Keeping the Sunday of '[Divine Mercy](#)' today, as Our Lord asked of it through His saint, Faustina, in the 1930s, is very much unified with this Easter faith of St Thomas. Part of the Divine-Mercy devotion is to venerate an image of the Lord Jesus's mercy, the famous image (behind me) as St Faustina witnessed it in 1931 — from His Sacred Heart pour forth the life-giving water and blood which came from His body as He died: Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, through which we experience the life-giving mercy of our Saviour. And there are powerful prayers, too, that are associated with this Divine-Mercy devotion. Many Catholics already recite these prayers, especially at the Divine-Mercy hour of 3pm, the traditional time when Our Blessed Lord gave His life on the Cross. It's not quite 3 o'clock, but, still, I'd like to recite these simple invocations that form part of the popular '[Divine Mercy chaplet](#).' ...

“Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your Dearly Beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world. ...

“For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world. ...

“Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.”

At this point in world history — the virus pandemic — I think that we are aware, as maybe never before, of the unity of the human family as it suffers together regardless of national boundaries. We are, each one of us in the world, in need of the merciful love of the Redeemer: “Have mercy on us and on the whole world.” Whether we are praying for ourselves, in need of mercy for our sins; whether we are praying for our neighbour in sickness or desperate need; whether we are praying for parishioners, family or friends; or our nation, our NHS, or the world ... we are united in acknowledging that we are all in need, but that we can trust. The Divine-Mercy devotion comes down to that evocation of *trust in Jesus* that is built up on the faith of the whole Church, from the apostles, to the countless Christians over the centuries, saints among them, to the people of God today who express their trust in God in countless ways. We can, and do, join them, reassured that we are loved and saved by a merciful God who brings us through times of testing to forgiveness and peace: “*Jesus I trust in you ...*” (x3).