

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER
Year A April 27, 2014

Theme: Believing is Seeing

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We usually say “seeing is believing”:

“When I see you lose about 20 pounds and give up smoking then I’ll believe you’re really serious about getting healthy.”

Or: “I see they have started to cut down the trees and blast away the hillside, so I believe they really are going to build the rest of the road down to Washington.”

The Gospel text for this Second Sunday of Easter, seems to suggest a reversal of that idiomatic phrase: “believing is seeing.”

Every year we hear this story of the disciples Lord’s Day encounters with the Risen Jesus, the first minus the Apostle Thomas, the second with him present.

The ten other apostles saw the Risen Lord and believed, but could not convince Thomas to believe on their word.

Thomas wanted to see and believe for himself: actually he want to do more than see; he wanted to touch and to probe with his fingers and his hands.

The following Lord’s Day, Jesus offered him just that chance: **“Put your finger here and see my hand and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.”**

Thus Thomas became a believer because he saw.

And as we heard, Jesus went on to bless those who **“have not seen but believed.”**

Specifically, that’s us, you and me: we have not seen the Risen Jesus; we have not seen his hands and his side, yet we believe.

Yet we believe he is risen from the dead.

We believe he bears the nail marks in his hands and spear mark in his side as surely as he did when he stood before Thomas and the others.

In our case, it is no longer because we see, we believe.

Rather, because we believe, we see!

Because we believe, we see the Risen Jesus present here in our midst when we gather every Lord’s Day in his memory, just as his disciples have done every Lord’s Day since the day of his Resurrection.

Because we believe, we now can see the Bread and Wine we place on this Holy Table are transformed into his Body and his Blood and become the Food and Drink that will sustain us into his Kingdom.

Because we believe, we can now look around this room and see not just other people who happen to live in this city and area; we see instead the holy people of God, a people made clean and new by Baptism and the Spirit.

Believing has given us a new vision, a transformed way of looking at the world and ourselves.

Believing is seeing with the eyes of faith.

We are indeed blessed, as Jesus declared, but that does not mean such belief is always easy or without struggle.

Doubt creeps in and we wonder if we are not just playing mind games with ourselves and each other:

---Is the risen Christ truly present or are we just imagining it?

---Where is the energy and strength that is supposed to come from his Spirit?

---Does this Church of God have a future in service and evangelization?

Such doubts must be normal, natural and to be expected, as we are operating on a level of reality far different than is usual for us.

Perhaps we need simply to live with and weather such doubts without losing heart or abandoning faith altogether.

“Believing is seeing” lifts us to a spiritual level of reality on which we do not normally live and at times living there is uncomfortable and uneasy.

Yet believing enables us to see a deeper spiritual reality that cannot be seen if one does not believe.

The choice then is to believe and see that deeper reality and delight in its mystery and even endure the doubts or to have no belief and see nothing at all.

Believing is seeing:

---seeing the mystery of the Risen Christ present among us as he always is and always has been on this Lord's Day.

---believing is seeing the Bread and Wine as the Food and Drink of the Kingdom.

---believing is seeing these people gathered here as the Holy People of God.