



## THEOLOGY CORNER

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*Theological Reflections by Paul Chutikorn - Director of Faith Formation*

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### “Faith, Sight, and the Easter Season”

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As we approach the Easter season entering into Holy Week, it is helpful to be reminded of what this entire Lenten season has been about – a reordering of our desires so that we can have a pure faith and a pure love. But I want to focus on the faith aspect for this reflection because there is so much to say about faith before we even get to the concept of love (i.e., charity). Later this month, on Divine Mercy Sunday (Second Sunday of Easter), the Gospel reading includes the dialogue between Jesus and Thomas. Thomas did not believe that Christ had risen until he had seen the marks of the crucifixion. It was not until he had seen and touched the wounds of Christ that he believed. It was only in *sensing* the wounds of Christ that caused Thomas to utter the words, “My Lord and my God!” It was after these words from Thomas that our Lord replies with a new beatitude: **“Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.”** (John 20:29).

This exchange between Jesus and Thomas should bring to mind the kind of faith that each of us currently possess. Do we believe because we sense Christ and have doubts when we do not sense him? When things go wrong in our lives, do we lose faith in Jesus? If so, then there is need for purification. This is one of the purposes of Lent and it shows how Lent is ordered to the Easter season. For it is when our mind and our hearts are purified through the grace that God offers us, through our Lenten practices (including the frequent reception of the sacraments), that we are able to participate most perfectly in the celebration of his Resurrection at Easter. This is a difference between us and the disciples during the time of Christ. They had faith in the fact that Jesus was God, but they had the luxury of seeing him in the flesh. We do not have this same luxury. So, it is as if Jesus is speaking directly to us when he says the words: “blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.” In fact, this is a huge problem in the Church today when so many Catholics do not even believe in the Real Presence in the Eucharist. We do not *see* him, so we don’t *believe*. This is the beauty of the words of St. Thomas Aquinas in the *Tantum Ergo*: “*Præstet fides supplementum sensuum defectui*” – let faith provide a supplement for the failure of our senses. This is what Jesus desires and it is crystal clear in his words from John 20:29.

But there is more to the virtue of Faith than simply believing without seeing. This must be the case because to say otherwise would be to say that to have faith is actually to be in the dark. Yet, we see countless times in the scriptures when faith is understood as a “light.” For whoever believes in him “may not remain in darkness” (John 12:46) and his “word is a lamp unto my feet and light unto my path.” (Ps 119:105). Thus, it is not that faith involves being in darkness; rather, it is through faith that we truly *see*. This Lent, we were all tasked to allow the Lord to purify our minds so that the darkness of sin which blinds us to the truth can be extinguished and replaced with the light of faith helping us to see reality as it is – the reality of the Resurrection, and the reality of God’s will for us. Without faith, we are walking about the world without clarity, as if there were a fog clouding our vision of the world as God intended it to be. We should all be entering the Easter season with de-fogged eyes by renewing our baptismal promises and living a life of grace; becoming more human by living up to the divine image in which we have been created and drawing closer to the divine likeness as it was in the beginning before the Fall of our first parents.

This is unbelievably significant in all of our lives right now, whether we know it or not. Faith enables us to see the truth and, as Jesus tells us, the truth sets us free. But we cannot possibly be set free without the light of faith illuminating the truth for us to see. We must allow ourselves to be awakened by God: “Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.” (Isaiah 60:1). When we wake up to see reality as it is, when we wake up from the slumber of sin, when we drown out the noise of all the distractions of the world, it is there that we can hear the voice of God speaking to us; like a voice crying out in the wilderness asking us to listen. It is at this time that we can be reinvigorated with fresh eyes to see the beauty all around us – in our families, in our community, and in the Mass. This is the Easter joy of which we Christians speak. Indeed, *blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe*, for it is in believing that we may all truly see. But, as St. Paul says, we still see dimly until we see God face to face in heaven. May God bless you with eyes of faith in this Easter season so that you may experience a newness of life in Christ Jesus.