

But even as the Apostles spoke of these things that first Easter Sunday evening, Our Lord appeared to them. St. Luke says, "Now while they were talking of these things, Jesus stood in their midst and said to them, 'Peace to you! It is I, do not be afraid.' And He said to them, 'Why are you disturbed, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and feet, that it is I myself. Feel me and see; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have'" (Luke 24:37-39). As Our Lord spoke, He showed them His hands and His feet, but the Apostles still did not fully grasp what was happening. They still were not convinced He was flesh and blood. And so the loving and patient Jesus showed them another proof: He ate, and then He fed them. St. Luke says: "But as they still disbelieved and marveled for joy, he said, 'Have you anything here to eat?' And they offered him a piece of broiled fish and a honeycomb. And when he had eaten in their presence, He took what remained and gave it to them" (Luke 24: 41-43).

Now, the Apostle Thomas was not with them when Our Lord appeared. When he arrived later, the others told him everything that happened: "We have seen the Lord" (John 20:25). "But he said to them, 'Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe'" (John 20:25). These immortal words of Thomas were spoken the very day that Christ rose from the dead. The following Sunday they were all together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were shut and Our Lord came once more and stood in their midst. "Peace be to you," He greeted them. He then looked at Thomas, the Doubter, and held out his hands. He showed him the wound in His side through which His Sacred Heart was pierced: "Bring hither thy finger... bring hither thy hand, and put it into My side" (John 20:27). One can imagine Thomas approaching Our Lord, taking the Divine hands into his own hands and then putting his index finger into the holes made by the nails. One can imagine Thomas looking at the adorable wound in Our Lord's side, and then driving in the tips of his fingers into this wound. The soldier had pierced Our Lord's Heart with the lance. Thomas pierced it with his disbelief. But there is no more disbelief in Thomas now. He became a sorrowful and weeping believer. If he

could, he would himself enter the side of Christ and find repose in the Sacred Heart. Falling to his knees, he clasped the feet of Jesus with those holy tears of sorrow and love streaming down his cheeks. "My Lord and My God," cried out the penitent believer (John 20:28). But the ever-kind and ever-gracious Jesus raised him to his feet again. "Because you have seen Me, Thomas, you have believed. Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed" (John 20:29).

The wounds which our Divine Savior displayed to Thomas on His Sacred Body after His resurrection are still there and will be there for all eternity. He is the Lamb with marks of slaughter upon Him for all eternity. Even now in heaven those wounds are on the glorified body of Christ. St. Thomas Aquinas says that there are four reasons why: first of all, the wounds are there "...as an everlasting trophy of His victory." The second reason is that the wounds would "...confirm the hearts of the disciples as to the faith in His Resurrection." The third is that "...when [Jesus] pleads for us with the Father, He will always show the manner of death He endured for us." The final reason is that His wounds will accuse sinners who died in mortal sin at the judgment. His wounds will remind them of the love of the Sacred Heart and of the Precious Blood that was shed for them in vain (*Summa Theologica, Vol. II, p. 2316*). St. Augustine speaks about this as well. He says: "Christ kept the scars in His body, for as He showed them to Thomas who would not believe except he handled and saw them, so will He show His wounds to His enemies, so that He who is the Truth may convict them, saying: 'Behold the Man Whom you crucified; see the wounds you inflicted; recognize the side you pierced, since it was opened by you and for you, yet you would not enter'" (ibid. 2317).

Enter into the side of the Risen Christ. Stay close to His Sacred Heart in the Blessed Sacrament and the Sacrament of Penance. As you contemplate Our Lord in His glory, do not neglect to look upon His wounds, and be not incredulous of His love for you. Cry out with St. Thomas, "My Lord and My God," and you will partake of the blessing imparted by Our Lord: "Because you have seen Me, Thomas, you have believed. Blessed are they who have not seen, and have believed."