

“Believe, Then See”
Easter Day, April 5, AD 2026
St. John XX. 1-10

We’ve all heard the saying “Seeing is believing.” That was St. Thomas’s basic reaction to the other disciples who told him they had seen the risen Lord. Thomas wanted visual, physical evidence:

“Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.” [St. John 20:25b] Eight days later, that’s exactly

what Jesus allowed him to do, adding these important words:

“Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” [St. John

20:29] Clearly, Jesus is directing His followers to another plane

altogether of “seeing and believing” where “believing” is step 1,

then “seeing” the true picture follows next. Believe first, then see

with spiritual eyes. It’s all a bit counter intuitive, isn’t it? But if we

allow our liturgy to guide us, the core beliefs of our faith will sink

into our very being, and we too can touch and be touched by Jesus

Christ through the power of the Holy Ghost that inhabits the temple

of our bodies, and Christ’s Body, the Church.

Obviously, we are not able to see and touch Jesus in the same

way St. Thomas did. Yet we are still “blessed” because our Lord

gave his followers two important means of “seeing” Him: the

sacrament of His Body and Blood, and the Holy Ghost. We can all have a lively connection with Christ because He established the Church as His Body with Him at the Head and filled it with His Spirit at Pentecost. We can “believe” the reality of the risen Lord each and every time we come to His Church and do the work of the people in the Liturgy. Christ’s Spirit infuses all our prayers, ritual acts, hymns, and Scripture, such that we live into the life of our Risen Lord and better understand His importance to us personally, and our mission as part of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. Our tired, jaded eyes can then be miraculously opened to “see” the Real Presence of Jesus among us, and what He wants for our lives.

The Bride of Christ, the Church that Jesus Himself initiated through His interaction with His disciples, has been the “temple” of the Holy Ghost throughout the history of Christianity. In the liturgy of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, the Spirit of the Risen Lord is there, making its way into our hearts and transforming us into the Sons and Daughters of God that Christ wants us to be. If you’ve ever had trouble fully comprehending the tremendous and history changing event of Christ’s Resurrection, (and who of us hasn’t), let the Liturgy wash over you and carry you away from all worldly cares to the apprehension of the supernatural Grace of our Triune God.

And so, in today's Collect we pray for God's "special Grace preventing us" – that is, going before us – to fix our mind's desires to the sacrificial love of Christ, for only by that "special Grace" are we able to be saved from sin and death. We certainly can't save ourselves, though we like to think we can at times. In the Nicene Creed we acknowledge the central truths of our faith, including the Incarnate reality of Christ and His Resurrection, the life-giving power of the Holy Ghost, and the need of "one Baptism for the remission of sins."

The central element of our Liturgy, the Eucharist, goes back to its very source in Jesus Christ. *"Do this in remembrance of me,"* says Jesus at the Last Supper on the night He was betrayed. Frequent communion with Christ in the Holy Eucharist is vitally important to our souls. Why? Because Christ is here, offering Himself to us again and again in a bloodless sacrifice for our soul's nourishment. The shedding of His blood has already occurred once and for all at Calvary, and to what end? According to Jesus' own words, it was *"for the remission of sins."*

And that brings us to Holy Scripture—that foundational revelation of God's plan of redemption for all humanity. In today's Gospel from St. John, we learn that the tomb is empty where Jesus' body was placed. The stone has miraculously been rolled away from the tomb. Mary Magdalene finds the tomb empty and runs to tell

Simon Peter and the *“other disciple, whom Jesus loved”* – who is probably St. John. Mary Magdalene sees the empty tomb and believes the body of Jesus has been stolen. Skeptical minds both then and now think the same thing. But Scripture paints a truthful picture for those who can make a “leap of faith.” *“Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”*

St. John in his First Epistle General, writes in Chapter 5: *“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God... whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”* All this and more is thought by many to be written by the *“other disciple,”* the one closest to the Lord, the one who saw the empty tomb and the linens, and believed. He knew that after Christ’s Ascension, the order of seeing and believing had to be reversed.

We come to Christ’s altar today to experience once more the infinite mercy of God to *“forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* Once more we can avail ourselves of the Holy Eucharist, about which Jesus has said, *“Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”* Through the physical, sacramental means of bread and wine, Jesus Christ is once again giving us His all--His Incarnate, Crucified, Resurrected, Ascended and Glorified Self. This Real Presence of our Lord can be more powerful than 200 volts of electricity. It can make

us die to our fallen selves and rise with Christ to new life in Him. New life that at our physical deaths leads to eternal life with Him, if we believe what the Church's liturgy teaches us about our faith.

On this day of all days, let us **believe, then see** how Jesus Christ, through the power of His Holy Spirit, fills the temple of our bodies with all peace, righteousness, joy, and love. Through our fervent prayers, songs of praise and thanksgiving to our risen Lord, and the Body and Blood of Christ feeding us in the Eucharist, our faith becomes real, not a dry intellectual exercise. In the words of Jesus, *"All things are possible to him that believeth."* Today, whatever heavy stone is weighing on our hearts is being rolled away for new life to emerge. Today, we too, like St. John, can **believe** and exclaim, *"I know that my redeemer liveth."* On this day and henceforth, we **see** the Truth: Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

And now unto God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all might, majesty, honor, and dominion, as is most justly due this day, both now and forever, Amen.