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Sunday Sermon by His Eminence Archbishop Seraphim of the Holy Archbishopric of Zimbabwe (26th of April 2020)



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By His Eminence Archbishop Seraphim
Of the Holy Archbishopric of Zimbabwe

Sunday of Saint Thomas

In the joy of Resurrection, our Church spotlights the example of the doubting Thomas, who through the greatness of his faith, constitutes a lesson for all those who pass through the phase of unbelief.

So, even if the doubting Thomas was close to Christ for three whole years where he had an opportunity to witness miracles and various good works, still he found himself doubting the Resurrection of Christ, insisting on touching and feeling the nail marks of the crucified body of Christ.

The meaning of unbelief has either a well-intentioned or ill-intentioned quality.

It has a well-intentioned quality when you are struggling to believe something because it seems to you unlikely and you are seeking more evidence, more information, so that you might believe. However, unbelief also has an ill-intentioned quality when you reject something, which can help you simply, and only because you are negatively predisposed towards whatever it is that you cannot comprehend.

Naturally, the term unbelief has many meanings, like the mistrust between spouses when their love begins to fray. Beyond however the moral and material quality of unbelief, there exists also the religious quality of unbelief. This is the situation where man falls into the error of rejection of every religion and religiousness.

It is the situation where man becomes presumptuous, arrogant, and selfish, where he levels out everything, rejects everything in order to give an exclusive priority to himself, to his self, to his ego. However, a person can also be unbelieving in relation to contemporary scientific knowledge, where he finds it impossible to believe new scientific facts and he insists on living in his enclave of darkness.

Today’s Gospel extract however refers to well-intentioned unbelief where man, with every good intention, seeks much more evidence so that

he is able to believe whatever he is struggling to believe due to his limited knowledge.

We can further say that our Church by spotlighting the example of the doubting Thomas tries to console us, to give us courage and to support us when we also go through the phase of unbelief similar to that of Saint Thomas. Therefore, if one of Christ’s disciples, who experienced so many of Christ’s miracles at such close range, could arrive at the point of doubting the Resurrection and divinity of Christ, is it not possible that some of us, after two thousand years, who did not personally live Christ’s miracles, will also pass at a specific time through this phase of unbelief, which in reality is an expression of faithlessness?

It is necessary however at the difficult testing moments of our unbelief, with patience and prayer and the spiritual guidance of our spiritual advisor to

strengthen our belief. The example of Saint Thomas comes to console us and simultaneously to remind us of his confession of the person of Jesus Christ as the real God.

Therefore, the important point of today's Gospel extract is not the unbelief of the doubting Thomas, but the confession of Saint Thomas' belief that Jesus Christ is the Son and Word of God, our Lord and our God.

The genuine realization on our part concerning the Divinity of Christ is shown with our resolution to follow His Divine Commandments to live according to these all our life. This is exactly what all of Christ's Apostles did, like the Apostle Thomas and all the Saints of our Church.

The framework within which we can follow the example of our Saints is from inside our pure and indiscriminate love towards every person who needs our help, black, white, relative, friend, stranger, young or old – just as Christ and his disciples and our Saints would do.

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