

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe. That's how it is written here in the gospel. What does Christ mean by this? That is what I would like to dedicate this sermon to.

When evening had come... Sunday evening after the Resurrection, a week ago, Christ appeared to his apostles and bestowed on them the Holy Spirit. He appears to them even though He had been crucified and died the day before. And He does not appear to them as a spirit, but with a human body. That was the body He had before His crucifixion, but with His Resurrection that body was changed, transformed. He had a body like Adam and Eve had before the fall. A body that no longer dies, a body that is not bound by time and place. The apostles are stunned.

Apostle Thomas was not there and so he doesn't believe it. He has not seen it himself and therefore he cannot believe it. Only if he can perceive it with his own senses will he believe it. Thomas was not so different from the other apostles, only he was not present when Christ appeared while the others were. He reacts in a human way; only when I see it with my own eyes do I believe it. After spending years with Christ, he still trusts only his own perception. And in it he reflects man, he reflects us. For we too, after years in the church, usually trust only our own eyes, our own perceptions, and our own reasoning.

What makes us believe without having seen it? The Holy Spirit . It exposes, revives, what is already present deep within us. The knowledge of God, the knowledge that God is there. It is another way of thinking , another of feeling , another way of perceiving through which we can believe without having seen it with our bodily eyes. How do we get to that Holy Spirit? Through the Gospel, the Psalms, the Lives of the Saints , through the prayers, through the sacraments, through not judging our fellow man, by softening our hearts.

And what does Christ do after hearing the doubts of Thomas ? He reappears and lets Thomas feel and see that it really is Him. No spirit appearance but Christ on earth in a body, a transformed body. A supernatural body, but indeed a body of flesh and blood. That requires that new kind of thinking from us. A body of flesh and blood , yet a body that can just enter a locked room . And Thomas is convinced ; it is indeed the Lord! Then Christ says: Blessed are those who do not see and yet believe. Christ does not reject Thomas, as he does not reject us who only want to believe if we can see and feel it ourselves, but believe without having seen it is of a another order, that brings the Kingdom of Heaven.

Then Christ still says : As the father sent me , so do I send you . How has the Father sent Christ ? He was born through the Virgin Mary. From a pure heart, a pure soul comes Christ. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. So did the Father sent Christ .

Blessed are those who see not and yet believe. That seeing points to seeing with our senses. In one way or another perceiving with our senses. Or seeing it because we have become convinced. But we have to look at it in a

different way , seeing it with our nous . A pure nous perceives Christ. The nous is our mental state. They are the glasses through which we perceive things. If those glasses are dark, then we see things dark, if those glasses are light then we will be able to perceive the Light. If our spirituality is directed towards the Divine Light, then we can perceive Christ. The Christian path is often described by the fathers as purification, enlightenment and deification. We will have to start with purification, the purification of our hearts. It is not without reason that the first ode of the canon of Passover says; "Let's purify our senses! Then we shall behold Christ. ". Pure senses means a pure heart. So that our heart only wants God and has no other, hidden, loves. That leads us to enlightenment that allows us to see life as it is and not as we see it through those cloudy glasses. This is what Christ is talking about; Blessed are those who do not see with their physical eye, but can see with their spiritual eye, and thereby believe, believe from a knowing, having seen with their spiritual eye.

Christ does not reject anyone who struggles to obtain this, who struggles to believe but still clings to physical perception , like Thomas , but truly blessed shall we be if we can let go of that physical perception. That is only possible with a pure heart , a heart that only wants Christ.