

The Gospel's Voice



Orthodox Parish of the Holy Transfiguration

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Faith as a personal relationship with Christ

by Fr Athanasios

In April we read in the Gospel (John 20 / 19-31) how the apostle Thomas, at the announcement of the resurrection of Christ, said that he would believe only if he could touch the wounds of the crucified. Now Jesus appeared among his disciples, and this time Thomas was there. Jesus invited him to see by sight and by touching his wounds. Thomas then believed and replied: « *My Lord and my God!* »

Jesus then said:

« *Because you saw me, you believed? Blessed are those who believe without seeing me!* »

The following Sunday, it was the turn of the Myrrhophores and Joseph of Arimathea (Mark 15/43 - 16/8).

These good people intervened to take care of the corpse of Jesus. Joseph brought him down from the cross with the permission of Pilate, wrapped him in a shroud and placed it in a new grave, carved in the rock, then closed by rolling a large stone cut for this purpose in front of the opening of the tomb.

Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses were witnesses. It was Friday in the late afternoon.

On the following Sunday morning, Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of Jacques and Salome, went to the tomb in order, according to the Jewish custom of the time, to coat the corpse with perfumed oils. Along the way, they wondered how they would roll the stone that closed the entrance to the tomb. Now, to their great surprise, the tomb was open and empty! A young man sitting in the grave said to them:

- *«Do not be afraid, you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth. He came back from death to life. He is waiting for you in Galilee.»*

The three women fled trembling and filled with fear.

We understand one thing first: no one has witnessed the resurrection of Christ live. But there are many witnesses who have seen the resurrected, spoke to him and ate with him.

But let us return to our point. In May, we read the account of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman (John 4: 5-42). In this interview, Jesus said, *« God is the Spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. »*

Of these 3 texts, I take the following lesson: to know Christ and to be able to say as Job: *« My Redeemer is alive! »* (Job 19/25) or: *« Christ is truly risen! »* as witnessed by an innumerable crowd of witnesses for almost 2000 years, one must have personally met Christ in spirit and in truth.

From this will come personal experiences: a solution to a problem, a response to an important demand, a healing, but also repentance and forgiveness that our Lord God willingly gives us, *« communion with the cloud of witnesses who surrounded us »*, as St. Paul says so well (Hebrews 12: 1), that is to say, the saints who have preceded us, and of whom we are, so to speak, contemporaries. They pray for us and sometimes transmit messages from the Lord to guide us on the right path.

There is an exercise to be done that will comfort you in faith and love for God. This exercise is recommended by many Fathers of the Church: remember all the times the Lord has intervened in your life. What Psalm 102 says so well:

« Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of his rewards. »

What inspired the author of this song:

*« Count the blessings of God,
Put them all before your eyes,
And you will see by adoring,
How great their number is! »*

These may be harmless events, which are generally described as « *contingencies of circumstances* »" or which happen « *by chance* ». For example on a Sunday evening, a couple with 5 children, realizes there is nothing more to eat. No more provisions, no more money either in the purse or in the bank. The father of the family then invites his wife and their children to come and sit at the table. He said to them:

- « *Tonight we will not eat but we will thank the Lord for all that He has given us.* »

Hardly had he finished talking, when someone heard a knock. One of the children opened the door.

An unknown lady stood there on the threshold:

-« *Excuse me for disturbing you at this hour! At the parish, today we had a meeting with the youth. There are a lot of sandwiches left. We thought it might interest you,* » she said, handing them a large plastic bag!

That evening the family enjoyed sandwiches and thanked the Lord.

Let us therefore make this exercise of memory which constitutes an adoration in spirit and in truth, and we shall then discover how God is present in our life, and that even in trials, difficulties or suffering He is present and enables us to discover the meaning of what we live and comfort, giving us Peace, Strength and Joy.

« *Our faith, as Saint Paul says, becomes the certainty of what we hope for and we are convinced of the reality of what we do not see.* » (Hebrews 11: 1)

In the light of Easter, we can therefore also say:

**Christ is risen!
He is truly risen!**

Divine Liturgy

Every Sunday at 9.30 a.m.

On the 7th of May :Sunday of the Paralytic

14th : Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

21st : Sunday of the Man Born Blind Sees

Thursday 25th : The Ascension. Matins at 9h30 a.m.

28th : Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the First Oecumenic Council.

Matins at 9.30 a.m. every week day.

The Orthodox Church of the Holy Transfiguration

Grande-Rivière N-O

Mauritius

(behind Garage BALA)

**Divine Liturgy every
Sunday**

at 9.30 a.m.

*Matins at 9.30 a.m. every
week day.*



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