

Second Sunday of Easter
Fr. Mike Galbraith

The year was about 90 A.D. John's generation was disappearing; none of the younger Christians had known Jesus in the flesh, nor had they witnessed his appearances after the Resurrection. John's gospel wants to include them. "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Thomas refused to believe what he had not seen; later he saw and believed. What did he see? Nothing that a skeptic couldn't reasonably doubt. "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:30). It takes more than eye-witnessing to make faith. A faith that restricts itself to what is evident to the senses and reason is faith in reason, not faith in God or in Jesus. Religious faith is not a balance of evidence but an opening of the mind and heart.

Is our faith irrational then? The traditional answer is no: it is not *against* reason, but *beyond* it, nevertheless overlapping in part. There is a strong temptation to remain within that overlap, effectively reducing the faith to a kind of "philosophy for the millions." If a person wanted to discredit the faith, the best way would be to argue weakly in its favor. In rejecting the arguments, people would also reject the faith. Sadly, this is just what we often do.

An argument is like a lock; we talk about 'clinching' an argument. It is always useful to ask yourself what you have won when you have won an argument. What have you pinned down and enclosed, what do you now have in your grip? It can often be a lonely thing to win an argument; you are left with a little patch that you have identified with yourself, and you have missed the wide world.

The disciples had locked themselves in. Fear was their motive, as it is the motive behind all locks. Suddenly, "Jesus came and stood among them." It does not say that he knocked on the door and asked to be admitted: they would not have believed him anyway. It does not say he rattled keys in the lock: that would have frightened them even more. Inexplicably, against all sense and reason, he stood among them; he stood within the tight circle of their fear. Fear is a lock that can be opened only from the inside. Jesus still stands within the sealed and guarded heart, if we dare to let ourselves believe it.

Fr. Mike