

## HOMILY for the SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Mary Magdala saw that the stone had been moved away from the tomb ***“They have taken the Lord out of the tomb” she said, “and we don’t know where they have put him.”*** Then shortly afterwards, she met the risen Christ ... and then she came running to Simon Peter. This was the first **hint**, that the Apostles had **received** ... of the resurrection.

Peter and John were **convinced** that the body had **not** been physically **taken** away, because the linen cloths were left lying on the ground. They were now beginning to **believe** ... but the other Apostles were doubtful. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus were not sure of the women’s story either ... **until** Jesus broke the bread. The ten apostles were only **convinced**, when Jesus appeared to them in the closed room. However, the Apostle Thomas refused to believe the testimony of the other Apostles ***“Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.”***

It may surprise and amaze us ... that the Apostles were so reluctant to believe that Christ had risen from the dead. But we must remember that during their 3 years with Jesus, they saw nothing **in** him but a **mere man** ... a man with divine powers ... but, yet a man. This was probably because ... there were certain people in the Old Testament, who **also** had divine powers, but were still **men**. Such men as Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samson, Samuel, Judah, Elijah, Elisha and Isaiah who between them had conducted 54 miracles. In the New Testament there is 51 miracles. Jesus 36, Peter 5, Paul 8, Stephen 1, Philip 1. But only Jesus was divine, the others simply had divine powers.

Now, seeing as Jesus had emptied himself of his divine nature, they then could not grasp the fact, that he could **really be** God, as well as man. Jesus had foretold them of his resurrection many times ... however ... if he was a mere man, then death had to be the end. Thus, his resurrection was difficult for them to comprehend, because they had not yet realised that Jesus was God, with a human body.

Now, if the Apostles had been **expecting** the resurrection, and were anxiously looking **forward** to it ... people could say that they **imagined** it, and that they persuaded themselves it **had** happened. Because a hallucination is born in a **mind**, that is already expecting and hoping for, the **imagined** fact. However, their slowness of faith shows support for the fact that it wasn’t an hallucination.

Indeed, there have been men proud of their intelligence and judgement, who have said that the story of the resurrection, is a story of mass hallucination, despite all the evidence to the opposite. These proud men are convinced that it could **not** happen, and their conviction can only be **removed** from their **minds**, by **impressive** evidence that it **had** happened.

Thomas stubbornly refused to believe the words of the other ten Apostles. Thomas needed personal evidence ... and Jesus gave him that evidence. For Thomas's sake, Jesus appeared again in the very same place and in the same circumstances. He asked Thomas to prove for himself that his body bore the marks of the crucifixion. Whether Thomas did touch the sacred wounds we are not told ... but his declaration, "**My Lord and my God.**" proved how **convinced** he now was ... that Jesus is divine, as well as human.

Thomas's declaration goes further in expressing the divine nature of Christ ... more than any other person in the four Gospels. "**Lord and God**" were the words used in the Old Testament to stress the true God, "**Yahweh Elohim.**" We can thank the Apostles, and especially Thomas who was the last Apostle to give in, because they made our faith in the resurrection, and the divine glorification of Christ that much stronger.

Our Christianity would have **ended** before the first Easter week had passed ... if Christ had not risen from the dead. And it would **only** have spread rapidly throughout the then known world, because its author the divine Christ – is "Our Lord **and** our God" ... and it is **still** spreading today.

How prophetic were the words of Gamaliel at the meeting of the Sanhedrin, which tried to prevent the Apostles from preaching the new Christian faith: For Gamaliel said, "***If this enterprise, this movement of theirs, is of human origin it will break up of its own accord; but if it does in fact come from God, you will be unable to destroy them. Take care not to find yourselves fighting against God.***"

And this movement did not break up, because Jesus breathed on the Apostles, and filled them with the Holy Spirit ... and they became temples of God. And so are we, each a temple of God, because an Apostle has breathed the Holy Spirit into us.