

(Food for thought)

## Shock & Awe



We are now invited to celebrate the Fifty days of Easter - fifty days because this one event that cannot be captured in a single day - fifty days to let the aftershock of this incredible event vibrate in our minds and hearts and spirits. The aftershocks of Christ's Resurrection should loosen up the tight grip of our self-centeredness and hardheartedness. They should shake us up, and rock the foundations of the fortress we have built for our complacency, our prejudice, our fears, our spitefulness, and our passing judgment on others. They should open our hearts and remind us once again that even after 2000 years there is so much left to do.

The Gospel incident with Thomas also highlights this same sense of aftershock and awe. The evangelist tells us that immediately following the Resurrection, the disciples locked themselves in the upper room and went into hiding. They were devastated by the death of Jesus; everything they

had worked for the last three years was now destroyed. They had no one to turn to, nowhere to go, and they were afraid – they felt helpless and hopeless; and they were angry – angry with Jesus, angry with themselves, and angry with each other.

And then suddenly, without them even knowing, the Lord was there, among them... and he breathed on them, and he wished them his peace. Without a word, he forgave Peter for denying him three times; he embraced Thomas in his doubts. He didn't reprimand a single one of them for abandoning him – but instead sent them forth to continue his work among God's people – and he promised that *he* would never abandon *them*.

This journey of faith is, in fact, a series of journeys, all of which have paths that twist and turn; there are hills and valleys, joys and sorrows. Sometimes, there are magnificent victories; at other times, there are terrible failures and tragic defeats. The spiritual life is indeed life, at whose core is God's Spirit.

It also means that we come to a deeper understanding of what Church really is -

especially now, in these extraordinary times. Jesus rises to new life to bring to perfection His work of redemption. He rises to continue to teach, to heal, to forgive, to commission until the end of time, and He does that in and through His Body the Church. You and I are the Church. We cannot, we must not fail each other.

Our Easter Prayer should be that we might always have the courage to believe the words of Jesus when he tells us that he will always be with us and that he will never abandon us. If we can believe this, then despite the barriers that we place in front of ourselves, despite the walls that we build around ourselves for protection and safety, and despite the doors that we lock and hide behind... suddenly, without our even knowing, the Lord will be present among us – and he will breathe on us... and he will wish us his peace.

