



## The Resurrection and Christian Faith

### Believing

“Seeing is believing” is a quip we often hear, sometimes tongue-in-cheek. There is something about seeing that we identify with verification, with truth. If we see something – a person, an action – we are witnesses to the truth of an occurrence. Yet, seeing is not the only way to arrive at belief! We cannot see (or witness) everything in which we believe; there are certain truths we accept on the witness of someone we trust. Belief begins with the witness of someone we trust and is sometimes confirmed and strengthened by subsequent evidence. As Jesus would acknowledge to Thomas after the disciple refused to believe the testimony of the other disciples: “Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed” (Jn. 20:29). Jesus seems to give more credit to those who have not seen and have believed. Belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ developed with these basic premises. Yet, it began with *seeing* and *believing*.

### The Holy Women

The Catechism of the Catholic Church notes: “Mary Magdalene and the holy women...were the first to encounter the Risen One” (CCC 641). These women became the first witnesses of Jesus’ resurrection, and they announced their blessed encounter to the disciples. As the Gospel of John recounts, “Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord” (Jn. 20:18)! The resurrected Christ would thereafter appear to Peter and the disciples themselves so that they would have firsthand verification of Jesus’ resurrection.

### Peter and the Twelve

The apostles, as “witnesses of the Risen One, they remain the foundation stones of [Christ’s] Church” (CCC 642). The early Christian community in the first century got to know and trust the apostles, particularly Peter. Thus, they would exclaim, “The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon” (Lk. 24:34)! Though they had not seen the resurrected Jesus, they believed based on the witness of Peter and the apostles. The words of Jesus to Thomas resonate here: “blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

### Why is the Resurrection Important?

St. Paul exclaims to the Corinthians, “If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is in vain” (1Cor.15:14). It is the resurrection that confirms that all that Jesus did and taught was indeed true. Jesus truly had power over death. Jesus’ message of instituting the Reign of God hinged on his power to overcome sin and death. The resurrection confirms Jesus’

divine authority and his very divinity. The Catechism states: “The Resurrection of the crucified one shows that he was truly “I Am,” the Son of God and God himself” (CCC 653).

Moreover, it is because of Jesus’ resurrection that we, too, can rise to eternal life. As St. Paul declares to Timothy: “This saying is trustworthy: If we have died with him we shall also live with him; if we persevere we shall also reign with him” (2Tm 2:11-12). Let us die with Jesus in baptism and faith so we might live and reign with him in eternity!

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