



## Christ is Risen! I doubt that!

Every liturgical season, we greet each other with a seasonal response: “Christ is born – Glorify him” – we say this at Nativity. At Pascha, we say “Christ is Risen,” and the response is “Truly He is Risen.” Since this is Thomas Sunday, when someone says “Christ is Risen,” maybe we should respond with “I doubt that.”

Why? Well, it feels like a Thomas kind of world. The Resurrection is the greatest message that humanity has ever heard, but the world doubts it. Look out into the post-Pascha world and little has changed. The war goes on, gas prices continue to rise, and the rats are still running the race.

But, why should the world believe? After all, despite the glory of Pascha, I am still an unrepentant sinner. I am worse than St. Thomas because he touched the Lord’s flesh once and proclaimed, “My Lord and my God.” That is quite a statement for a first century Jew to make to anyone but the God of Israel. This touch would send Thomas all the way to India. I touch the Lord’s Body and Blood every Sunday and have done so for over 14 years, and I’ve hardly made it out of my house.



So, maybe the world ignores the greatest message of all time because the witness of my life is that I remain a slave to sin, and so much of my sin is based in my fears. In Hebrews, chapter 2, it says, “...through death He (Jesus) might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

Now, this is interesting. So, it is the fear of death that binds me and blinds me and makes me a slave to sin. Well, I don’t spend most of my day worrying about my physical death, but I do worry about a lot of things. Yet, I thought it was the fact that sin was fun or pleasurable that bound me to it. No, to be honest, the



power of sin lies is fear. As I think about the Lord's life, how many times did the angels say, "don't be afraid?" How many times did the Lord Himself say, "Be not afraid?" Am I afraid, really?

Yes, I am.

One example is that I judge others because it makes me feel superior to them. I need to feel superior because I am afraid that people will see what an utter fool I really am. I know exactly why the Pharisee was glad that he was not "like that man." I'm glad too because it eases the fear that I am a fool and hypocrite. After all, I can't be too bad when there are so many people who are obviously more sinful and more foolish than I.

Archbishop Andrei of Rockland in his book, "The One Thing Needful", says that Thomas was not so much in doubt as he was afraid. Thomas knew Christ and he know his commandments. Thomas loved and lived in his Lord. So, he was afraid that he might make a mistake. After all, Christ had warned that there would be false Christs, and so perhaps this appearance was one of them. This is what is meant when Thomas says that he will not believe until he touches the Lord himself.

In fact, fear permeates every aspect of life and it lies at the foundation of every habitual sin that plagues us. It was that way for our Parents. When Adam and Eve broke God's commandment, they hid in the bushes because they were afraid. They had "walked with God in the cool of the evening", now they hid themselves from their Father. Like Adam and Eve, I'm hiding because of fear, and it's fear that binds me. Even though I proclaim with my lips, Christ is Risen, my heart is wrapped in chains and my real response is "I doubt that."

Orthodoxy proclaims that Christ "trampled down death by death and upon those in the tombs, He bestowed life." This means that he destroys the binding power of death, which is fear. He defeated the one who uses this power, the devil. This means that my fears, though real to me, have no real power or reality. To know this, I have to be willing to open the dark corners of my soul to the light of the Resurrection. Having known fear, I know that it is only by faith that I can open the doors to let the light in. Without faith, courage fails me.

Maybe next Pascha, I will truly hear the Good News. The grave will open for me and the Risen Lord will stand before me and I will worship Him and not doubt. Maybe then I will know the glorious freedom of Christ. Maybe I will take the same hand that he extends to Adam and Eve and to the whole world. Then, I will proclaim the great message "Christ is Risen", and those who hear it will believe because they will see that the message has transformed the messenger from a slave to fear into a slave of God.

The President was right-"There is nothing to fear but fear itself." John the Revelator heard it from the Lord- "Don't be afraid...I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, and I hold the keys of Death and Hell."

Truly He is Risen! Truly He is Risen! Let's begin to live like we truly believe it, for if it is true, then life has been answered and we need never be afraid again.

Now, I invite you to come and touch His flesh in the Holy Eucharist!



**Source:** [Ramblings of a Redneck Priest](#)