

Scripture for March 30, 2008  
1st Sunday after Easter

## Reflection from John Surette, SJ

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**“Then he said to Thomas, Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.” “Do not be unbelieving, but believe.”**

**It seems that believing came more easily in earlier times than it does now. In specific Catholic terms, it seems to have been easier prior to the Second Vatican Council that ended in 1965 than it has been since that momentous event. Or, to put it another way, it seems that it was easier for our parents and grandparents to believe than it is for us. I am not certain of this but I suspect that, generally speaking, it is true.**

**Why is this true? One answer is to be found in the degree of affluence that many of us have achieved. Somehow all of our possessions can prevent us from seeing with the eyes of faith. Somehow having so much stuff can make it more difficult to experience our dependence upon the Divine. Somehow having so many material things can prevent us from experiencing the spiritual realities.**



**We are reminded of that Gospel teaching that it is more difficult for the rich person than it is for the poor person to enter the Kingdom of God. We are reminded of Jesus' often repeated admonition to those who have much... share what you have with others and live more simply.**

## The Well

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Another.*

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**A second answer as to why it is perhaps more difficult to believe in modern times has to do with the ever increasing pace of change in all aspects of our lives. Prior to the Second Vatican Council there was little change in our church, and so the answers to the big and important questions that we received when we were younger believers were the same answers that we possessed when we were older believers.**

**Many books written and sermons given when we were younger gave answers that today sound out-of-date, inadequate, and not helpful in the light of our 21<sup>st</sup> century problems and challenges.**

**In earlier times when life was more static and involved less change, believing was easier. In our twenty-first century when life is anything but static and unchanging, believing is something to which we need to give more attention, time and energy.**

**A third answer to our question about believing being more difficult has to do with our diminished awareness of God's promises to us.**

**The faith of Abraham and Sarah was founded on God's promise that they would have a line of descendants as numerous as the sands of the desert.**

**The faith of the Israelites during their forty years of wandering in the desert was sustained by God's promise of a land flowing with milk and honey. The faith of Jesus and his disciples was steeped in the promise of the coming Reign of God, a Reign of justice, peace, and love.**

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**You and I are part of that long line coming down from Abraham and Sarah through Jesus and his disciples. Accordingly, God's promises are also made to us.**

**We once thought that the universe was unchanging. Now we know that it has been unfolding for billions of years and that it carries the promise of unfolding for billions of more years. As members of that Universe our lives also carry this promise of unfolding. And so we know that our lives and therefore our faith will continue to change and that new truths will be revealed to us as the years pass.**

**The life of each of us in the chapel this morning, no matter at what stage we are, carries God's promise of something new and something more. Our Church, despite the clerical abuse scandal, carries God's promise that the gates of Hell will not prevail against her. Our world, despite all of the violence and war, carries God's promise of becoming a city shining on the mountain top. Our Earth, despite all the pollution and ecological diminishment, carries God's promise of greater abundance.**

**Yes, sisters and brothers, God is a promise keeper... "Do not be unbelieving, but believe."**