

# 2nd Sunday of Easter

Cycle B

April 15, 2012 5:30pm, 7:30 and 9am  
Saint Margaret Parish, Bel Air

## 3 Ways of Knowing

This morning, let's suppose that I put a blindfold on you, then I bring you up here into the sanctuary and ask you: does this baptismal font have water in it?

How can you answer the question without removing the blindfold? If you think about it, there are three ways that you can come to know whether or not the font has water in it.

The first way is obvious: you can reach in and feel with your hands. You can experience directly if the font is empty or full.

This way of learning is called experiencing. We get this knowledge through our senses – for example, by touching, much as Thomas in today's gospel wants to learn if this person really is Jesus by touching his wounds.

Then, the second way to learn if the font contains water is to drop something into it – like this rock. If the rock hits the bottom of the font with a thud, you know that it is empty, but if it makes a splashing sound, you know that there is water in it.

This way of learning is called reasoning. We get this knowledge by logically concluding to it from certain facts that we know, like concluding that the font has water in it from the splashing sound that we hear.

Finally, the third way to learn if the font contains water is to ask someone you trust. So if you trust me and I say, "*Yes, there is water in the font,*" then again you know the answer.

This way of learning is called believing. We get this knowledge by trusting someone, much as the disciples ask Thomas to trust them that Jesus is really alive.

## Importance of Believing

So, three ways that we can come to know something: by experiencing, by reasoning, and by believing.

The interesting thing is that experts tell us that almost 80% of what we know comes from believing. For example, most of us have never visited the Great Wall of China, but we believe what reporters tell us about it.

## Believing Is Seeing

On these Sundays after Easter, the Scriptures call us to believe in the risen Jesus.

In today's gospel, Jesus says, "*Blessed are those who do not see but still believe.*" The idea is that we accept so many things in everyday life by believing and trusting, and now we are also asked to accept the resurrection of Christ and the promise of our own resurrection in this way.

There is a common expression: Seeing is believing. But actually, the reverse is true.

If we believe only what we see, we will believe and trust and have faith in very little. The truth is: Believing is seeing.

Believing opens us to seeing great possibilities: for example, where we have come from, why we are here, and where we are going. Jesus and the Easter Season call us to believe without seeing, to believe so that we can see.

### Acting on Believing

A final insight is that we need to act on what we know by faith.

For example, if your doctor tells you that you have high cholesterol, you will probably use less mayonnaise on your sandwiches. The point is that we act on what we learn by everyday faith, and we also need to act on what we learn from our faith in Jesus' resurrection.

So, if we believe in the mystery of Jesus' dying and rising, then we need to live that. This means that we die to ourselves in certain ways – like holding our tongue and counting to ten instead of just returning hurt for hurt.

And the interesting thing is that if we die to ourselves in ways like this, we will experience a fulfillment or aliveness. Our dying to self will lead us to fuller life.

We will actually experience the mystery of dying and rising in everyday life. And this very experience will assure us that our believing in the risen Jesus is the right thing to do.