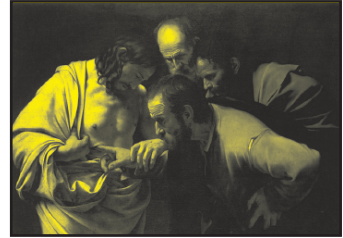


United Easter People



Carravaggio's Painting on the Doubting Thomas

I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

FIRST READING (Acts 4:32-35)

The community

^{32*}The **community of believers** was of one heart and mind (*they were united*), and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own (*no private property, like communism or religious life today*), but they had everything in common (*like communism or religious life today*).

The apostles

³³With great power (*of the Holy Spirit*) the apostles bore witness (*μαρτυρειν*) to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all (*just reward for the efforts of the apostles / believers*).

The community

³⁴There was no needy person among them,

Explanation

for those who owned property or houses (*the rich*) would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, ³⁵and put them at the feet of the apostles (*recognized authority of the apostles*), and they were distributed to each according to need (*equity, not equality*).

THE FOCUS: **The Community of Believers**

COMMENTARY

The First Reading describes the life of the first Christian community (vv.32 and 34).

It also describes the life of the apostles (v. 33).

- The community of believers: United, Equal (no rich no poor; no needy), Generous, Detached from property, Communitarian
- V.34 describes concretely how everybody

becomes equal.

- The rich take initiative to be poor; they sell and give to the apostles the proceeds who in turn distribute these.
- Not only the apostles give witness to the resurrection, but also distribute property.

REFLECTIONS

The people respond in a communitarian way. They form a community by giving up their belongings for the group.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24) GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD FOR HE IS GOOD, HIS LOVE IS EVERLASTING OR ALLELUIA

SECOND READING (1 Jn 5:1-6)

^{1a}Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is **begotten by God**, and everyone who loves the father loves [also] the one **begotten by him**. ²In this way we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments. ^{3b}For the love of God is this, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, ^{4c}for whoever is **begotten by God** conquers the world. And the victory that conquers the world is our faith. ^{5a}Who [indeed] is the victor over the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the **Son of God?**

^{6c}This is **the one who came through water**

and blood,* Jesus Christ, not by water alone, but by water and blood. The Spirit is the one that testifies, and the Spirit is truth.

THE FOCUS: Being Son of God

COMMENTARY

- The whole passage is controlled by the idea of being a child of God (begotten).
- You are a child of God if: You believe that Jesus is Christ; You love God; You keep his commandments; You conquer the world.
- You are a victor if you believe Jesus is the Son of God. Victory is a reference to the resurrection of Jesus.
- Jesus Christ himself became the son of God through water and blood (which came out of him when he was crucified).
- The Spirit testifies the sonship of Jesus and ours.

REFLECTIONS

We too become begotten of God if we believe. Remember the statement in the prologue of John (*to those who believed he empowered them to be children of God...*)

GOSPEL READING (Jn 20:19-31)

Setting: Sunday, doors locked, appearance and greetings of peace

^{19*} ^j On the evening of that first day of the week (*of the resurrection of Jesus*), when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, (*not just the apostles. They were still in Jerusalem*), for fear of the Jews, (*those who ordered the crucifixion of Jesus*), Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.”* (*This peace comes from the power of the resurrected Jesus. Therefore, the disciples should have nothing to fear by now. Peace here is the opposite of fear.*)

^{20*} When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.* The disciples rejoiced (*now there is a nice feeling*) when they saw the Lord. ^{21*} [Jesus] said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” (*mission sending: they have to go out of their hiding place*)^{22*}

^mAnd when he had said this, he breathed on them (*like in the creation of man, God breathing on the clay*) and said to them, “Receive the holy Spirit. ^{23*} ⁿWhose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.” (*Forgive those who killed Jesus and those who terrorize you. The disciples have power / authority over sinners.*)

The unbelieving Thomas

²⁴Thomas, called Didymus (*Twin*), one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ^{25o}So the other disciples said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” (*For Thomas, it is not only to see is to believe, but to touch is to believe. Very demanding! Skeptic.*)

Setting: next Sunday, doors locked, appearance and greeting of peace

^{26p}Now a week later his disciples were again inside (*again they are still in hiding? Maybe this time they are awaiting for another appearance of Jesus.*) and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.” (*Third time Jesus greets this way.*) ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, “Put (φερε) your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it (βαλε) into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.” (*Jesus is sensitive to the needs of Thomas.*)

The believing Thomas

^{28*} ^qThomas answered and said to him, “My Lord and my God!” (*a perfect response of faith which was not articulated by the other disciples.*)

^{29*} ^rJesus said to him, “Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.” (*Well, Jesus teaches Thomas that he should go beyond seeing and touching in order to be committed to Jesus.*)

The purpose of signs: to believe and have life.

^{30*} ^sNow Jesus did many other signs (*appearances are considered as signs*) in the presence of [his] disciples that are not written in this book. (*The author reminds the readers that they are reading a book.*)^{31*} But these are written that **you may [come to] believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God,** and that through this belief you **may have life in his name.**

THE FOCUS: Believe the Risen Lord