

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter, Cycle C: April 11, 2010**

The past nine (9) years have been very trying for the United States. Think of all the things that have happened: 9/11, the wars in Iraq & Afghanistan, Hurricanes Katrina & Rita, the Iranian & Korean threats, our financial meltdown, immigration reform issues and then we have all of our own personal hurdles to jump over. All of these issues occasionally get us into a reflective mode in which we end up attempting to answer the question: "Who are we as a people?"

Of course we can't agree on a single answer. If we could, things would be so much easier. So, in an attempt to address our dilemma we often look back to the documents that defined the "United States"--- the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution for starters--- and try to understand what our founders intentions were from the very beginning. The idea is that if we can understand who we were back then, we will have some idea of who we should now be.

And, so it is with us as Church. This Sunday and for the next five (5) Sundays, our first reading will be taken from the Acts of the Apostles, which is a sort of history of those first believers and a record of what the early "Church" was, in the broadest sense of the word. By looking at those readings, we gain an insight into who we were from the beginning, and who we should be today.

And what do we see? What can we learn from the first people to call themselves "Christian"? In a certain sense we can say that the apostles were going about doing the work of God, the same work that Jesus had been doing in his early ministry. However, we don't see them just sitting around and discussing their faith, we witness them living it.

But this wasn't always the case. In the early hours just after the death of Jesus, the disciples were living in fear and behind locked doors. They didn't know what to do or what all of this meant--- until the risen Jesus stood in their midst and said: "Peace be with you." With these words, things began to change. Courage replaced fear, trust

replaced doubt, clarity of purpose replaced confusion and hope replaced despair. And it was in that later encounter that Thomas made his famous declaration of faith: "My Lord and my God."

The fact, that we call Jesus Lord, is the reason that we do what we do. It's why the disciples carried out the work of Jesus. It's why it's not enough to just "talk" about what we believe; we are called to live it out in our hearts and in the world at large. But, that is where we most often fail. It is so easy to say that Jesus is Lord, but difficult to let him be the Lord of our very being and all that we are.

Today, we can easily see from Scripture that the early church was composed of people who really took to heart that Jesus was Lord. And we can learn a lot from that attitude as a Church and a nation. How do you think that we, you and I, will be judged one hundred years from now? Will people care what words we used to define ourselves? It's pretty clear, and rightly so, that we will be judged not by our words but by our actions as we lived out our lives. People will have expected us to show that we meant what we said and by the way we conducted ourselves, not only as individuals, but as a country and most importantly as a community of faith.

We can say we believe, we can say we trust and we can even say that we have faith in God, but if the fruit of our actions isn't there--- they are empty words. If we truly believe that Jesus is Lord, then we must show a willingness to get on board and pay the "price" for our faith. Such as, doing something for one another and truly surrendering to the one who knows what is best for our world and for us.

Thomas had it right. Do we? Can we utter the words, "My Lord and my God" and mean it? It sounds so easy. It's such a good starting point, but let's not let it end there. Let's "show" the world that we really mean it.