

GOSPEL PEARLS

The need 'to touch with our hands''

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On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld." Now Thomas,

one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed!" Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20: 19-31)

Many believe that true faith does not need to be "touched with your hands" as the apostle Thomas wanted to do with Jesus. But this is a mistake: a faith without concrete evidence is a faith about nothing. Jesus did not rebuke St. Thomas because he wanted to see the signs of his Passion, but because he had not believed in the testimony of the other apostles who had already seen and touched the risen Jesus. If someone has "touched" Jesus and his testimony is credible, it would be a mistake to expect another "sign" to be given, in addition to the "sign" that is already there. We just need to accept it as sufficient evidence in itself.