

Divine Mercy Sunday  
April 10-11, 2021  
Easter 2B: Acts 4:32-35; 1 John 5:1-6; John 20:19-31

At some point, we must decide, and we must trust. We have little practical choice. Humanly speaking, to withhold trust for any extended period of time will yield its own problems and disappointments. We may approach things with a pre-disposition that it is virtually impossible to appreciate until life throws a curve ball our way.

Years ago, I recall purchasing a Chicken Wellington entree at a reputable grocery store, closely following the directions, only to discover when I bit into the breaded dish that it was beef, not chicken. A simple mistake was made—no harm, no foul. Did I cease to trust them? No! But I did receive a complimentary Chicken Wellington upon my next trip to the store!

Ironically, people will often put trust into a website article prior to forming a reasoned opinion of their own. If it was written, it must be true! How shaky is our faith? Do not believe everything you hear about what the Church teaches, without double checking to verify. Our faith must be strong enough to withstand hits from outside. I recall the strong reactions to *The Da Vinci Code*, first as a book, then a movie. It threw many Catholics, though its own copyright page characterizes it as a work of fiction. But you wouldn't know that from the response it produced.

Its own fact page claims that: the Priory of Sion is a real organization; Opus Dei is a Catholic sect; all descriptions of artwork are accurate.

- (1)The Priory was a 20<sup>th</sup> c. fabrication of a chivalric order, whose founder testified under oath before his death that the list of priors was fraudulent; it was not an offshoot of a monastic order.
- (2)Opus Dei is a personal prelature, not a “sect”; they are rock solid
- (3)No serious art historian believes the figure to the right of Jesus in DaVinci's painting of the Last Supper was Mary Magdalene. None.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Fr. Joseph Carola SJ “Irenaeus Adversus The Da Vinci Code” FAITH Magazine May/June 2006

So, an obvious question from today's Gospel is raised. How do we deal with difficulties and doubt? Until his canonization in 2019, John Henry Newman was one of very few non-saints to be quoted in the Catechism. This alone bears witness to the profound influence he has had on theological development in the Church. My favorite quotation of all from Newman is this: "Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt, as I understand the subject; difficulty and doubt are incommensurate."<sup>2</sup>

Think about the important distinction he makes here. Difficulties are part of Christian journey of faith– do not fear them. Newman applied this principle to the doctrine of transubstantiation, our Catholic belief that the substance of bread and wine is transformed into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. Newman stated:

People say that the doctrine of Transubstantiation is difficult to believe; I did not believe the doctrine till I was a Catholic. I had no difficulty in believing it, as soon as I believed that the Catholic Roman Church was the oracle of God, and that she had declared this doctrine to be part of the original revelation. It is difficult, impossible, to imagine, I grant–but how is it difficult to believe?<sup>3</sup>

In Saturday's Breviary, an ancient catechesis formed the basis for the Office of Readings. It states: "Do not, then, regard the eucharistic elements as ordinary bread and wine: they are in fact the body and blood of the Lord, as he himself has declared. Whatever your senses may tell you, be strong in faith."<sup>4</sup>

Here, faith comes to our rescue, faith that is "founded on the very word of God who cannot lie. Surely, revealed truths can seem obscure to human reason and experience, but [as St. Thomas Aquinas taught] 'the

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<sup>2</sup> John Henry Cardinal Newman, *Apologia pro vita sua* (London: Longman, 1878), 239.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 331. Part VII. General Answer to Mr. Kingsley] Chapter V. Position of my mind since 1845.

<sup>4</sup> From the Jerusalem Catecheses, St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Cat. 22, *Mystagogica* 4, 1. 3-6. 9: PG 33, 1098-1106)

certainty that the divine light gives is greater than that which the light of natural reason gives.”<sup>5</sup> If we have some doubts, fine, let us deal with them. But do not allow difficulties to rob you of the peace that the Lord desires for you.

Allow the divine light to shine in to illumine our hearts and minds. Faith and trust in God are not to be separated from Christ’s Church, because Jesus founded the Church, and the Holy Spirit guides her still. With St. Thomas the Apostle, may we say with all our heart, “My Lord and my God.”

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<sup>5</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph #157, quoting St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh II-II, 171, 5, obj. 3.*