

The Second Sunday of Easter

April 11, 2021

The Church and the world are close to getting a new saint. He is not a priest, deacon, or religious brother. He is not an old man who lived a long life of penance away from the world hundreds of years ago. Rather, he is a teenager who died in 2006 at the age of 15. His name is Carlo Acuti.

Carlo was born in 1991 and lived in Milan, Italy. Though his parents didn't take him to church frequently, he had a fascination with the Eucharist from a very early age and loved to pray the rosary. After he made his first communion, he asked his parents to take him to church as often as they could. He went to confession every week and spent time in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.

Carlo loved computers and playing video games. His friends at school called him a "computer geek". Though not very strong himself, he had a reputation at school for standing up for kids who were being picked on and bullied.

More than anything else, however, Carlo loved Jesus. It made him sad that his friends at school didn't know and love Jesus as much as he did. He tried to explain it to his friends but they just didn't seem to get it. He thought that if they could just see how much God loved them that, like him, they would understand and love God in return.

Then, Carlo got an idea. He would use his computer skills to create a website cataloguing all the Eucharistic miracles in the world. There have been well over a hundred times in the past two thousand years when the Body and Blood of Jesus turned into real human flesh or when the Eucharist shed real blood. Carlo saw that as proof that the Eucharist is really what Jesus said it was - His Body and Blood. Carlo believed that if he could gather all these hundreds of Eucharistic miracles into one website, then he could show them to his friends and they could see for themselves how real the Eucharist is and how real Jesus is.

So, he set to work. Unfortunately, his efforts were slowed down when he developed leukemia. Though he suffered greatly, he offered it all up for the Church and for the Pope until he died on October 12, 2006. Because of his example of holiness, he is on his way to being declared a saint by the Catholic Church.

Many people were inspired by Carlo's project and so they continued his work. You can see the website he created today and see for yourself all the Eucharistic miracles that have taken place during the centuries, it is called "The Eucharistic Miracles of the World", or you can go to www.carloacutis.com click on the flag at the top, change the language to English and you can find it there.

The Second Sunday of Easter April 11, 2021

With the eyes of faith and love, Carlo Acutis saw Jesus in the Eucharist and believed in Him. He wanted others to see Him as well and know in their hearts how great God's love is for all of us.

In today's gospel, Thomas declares that he will not believe Jesus has risen until he sees him with his own eyes and touches his wounds. The empty tomb isn't enough proof for him. The story that the apostles tell isn't enough proof for him. He wants to see it with his own eyes. Doesn't Thomas sound like so many people in our day? Perhaps many of us are like Thomas. We want to see for ourselves before we believe.

In response, Jesus does something marvelous. He appears to Thomas and takes him up on his challenge. He lets Thomas see him and touch his wounds. At the same time, he scolds Thomas for not believing based on the evidence he had already given him - namely, the empty tomb and the testimony of the apostles. And Jesus tells Thomas that those who believe without seeing are blessed.

Now we have to be careful here. By saying, "blessed are those who have not seen and have believed", Jesus is not calling us to a blind faith. He is not saying that we must believe without any evidence. Rather, He is saying that He has given us plenty of evidence. Not just the empty tomb, not just the testimony of the apostles, but also the Eucharist.

This is what Carlo Acutis understood and why his Eucharistic miracles project is so important. In the Eucharist, we see the Risen Lord. Through the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus Christ is present in our midst. We do more than see Him. We do more than put our finger in His wounds. We actually receive Him. Blessed are we!

It is interesting that, throughout St John's gospel, Jesus appears on Sundays. In today's gospel reading, the resurrection takes place on a Sunday. But then Jesus waits a whole other week to appear again to Thomas, again on a Sunday. What is the point here? It is that the privileged place for encountering the Risen Jesus is the assembly of the faithful that takes place every Sunday. The place we see for ourselves that Jesus is truly alive and risen is at Mass.

Those who fail to go to Mass are like Thomas. They wander around in doubt. But, those who go to Mass every Sunday encounter the Risen Jesus in many ways. We encounter Him in the people gathered to pray with us who form the Church. We encounter Him in His word proclaimed in our midst through which God Himself speaks to our heart. We encounter Him in the priest who offers the sacrifice of the Mass in the person of Christ so much so that we can say that, in the priest, it is Jesus Himself who

The Second Sunday of Easter

April 11, 2021

offers the sacrifice on our behalf. And we encounter Jesus in the Eucharist - in His Body and Blood given to us.

Jesus Christ is alive and risen from the dead. The proof of it is to be found in the Eucharist. It is not just an event of the distant past but a reality that renews itself every Sunday when we gather for Mass.

On this Second Sunday of Easter, we celebrate the Divine Mercy of Jesus. Jesus has great compassion for sinners and wants them all to know how great His love is and how eager He is to forgive them. We see that in His response to Thomas who doubted. We see that in a marvelous way in the power to forgive sins that He gave the apostles on Easter Sunday and that has been passed down to our priests. And we see His mercy in the Eucharist - the gift of His love. I encourage all of you to go to the website to see for yourselves the Eucharistic miracles that have taken place all over the world. They are given to us so that we may believe.