

For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent* that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.

John was writing his eye-witness account of Jesus some thirty years later than the other three accounts, possibly around 95AD. There had been time for growth, reflection and observation. Many thousands of Christians had by then lost their lives for their faith in the Lord Jesus, both in Rome and in Jerusalem. John himself had been in prison and was now in exile, the last of Jesus' twelve apostles to remain alive.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Continuation of John 20: 22-31

Ver. 22.—*And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.* Why did He breathe on them? (1.) To signify the nature of the Holy Spirit, as proceeding both from Him and the Father. For as a man by breathing on another imparts to him his breath, so the Father and the Son by breathing *produce* the Holy Spirit, and communicate to Him their Spirit and Godhead. So S. Augustine (*in loc.*), Cyril, Bede, and others. This breathing was not the Holy Spirit Himself, but a sign of Him: so that it means, Receive by this breathing, -as by a sign and instrumental cause, the gift of the Holy Spirit. (2.) To signify that the Holy Spirit was consubstantial with Himself and the Father. (3.) To show that it was He who first breathed into Adam the breath of life. As if He would say, I first gave Adam his natural life by breathing on him, so by breathing on you, do I give you that Holy Spirit which bestows on you supernatural and divine life. I who first created men, am now their re-creator and restorer. See S. Cyril (*Lib. xii. 56*), Leontius, Euthymius, and S. Athanasius (*Quæst. lxiv. ad Antiochum*). (4.) S. Cyril and S. Basil (*de Spir. Sancto, cap. xvi.*) and S. Ambrose (*Serm. xx. in Ps. cxviii. [cxix.]*) say that Christ, by these words,

signified that He breathed into Adam not only breath but grace, and because he had lost grace by sin He restored it in this way to the Apostles, and through them to all men, being in fact the restorer of grace. He seems to say, Receive ye the Spirit which ye lost in Adam's person by sin. Breathe Him forth on penitents in the sacrament of penance, remit through Him their sins and restore them to the life of the Spirit by grace. Hear S. Cyril. "Man was at first made by the Word of God, and God breathed into him the breath of life, and strengthened him by the imparting of His Spirit. But since he fell by disobedience, God the Father refashioned him, and brought him to new life by His Son. And we may learn that as it was He who in the beginning created our nature, and sealed it by His Holy Spirit, so when He began the renewal of our nature, He gives the Spirit to the disciples by breathing on them, that just as we were created by Him at first, we may in like manner also be renewed by Him.

Symbolically. This breathing represents sin as a black cloud. For as a cloud is dispersed by the wind, so is every cloud of sin driven away by the breath of the Spirit. See Is. xliv. And again, it represents the judiciary power of remitting sins, which is exercised by the breath of the voice which says, *I absolve thee.*

Tropologically. It denotes that a Priest, in order to remit sin, should possess a mighty spirit, charity, and zeal, so as to breathe on penitents and lead them to true penitence, sorrow, and repentance, and thus dispose them for the remission of their sins. And so we see Confessors who are gifted with mighty resolution, wound with the spirit of their mouth many and great sinners, and convert them to holiness. Just as we read that S. Ambrose, when hearing the sins of those who confessed to him, was wont to weep, and thus by his own tears lead them to tears and contrition.

Receive ye the Holy Ghost. The Apostles had already received the Holy Ghost in Baptism and Holy Communion. But they were about to receive His fulness, according to Christ's promise, at Pentecost, in order to the conversion of the Gentiles, when the Holy Spirit descending on them visibly in form of fiery tongues, filled them to the full with all His gifts, and especially with the power of preaching. But here He confers on them the Holy Ghost for another purpose, the remission of sin. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," that is, power to remit sins by the Holy Ghost. So Theophylact, Euthymius, and Rupertus. This signifies that He came as was prophesied by Isaiah (xxvii. 9), and that both Christ and the Father gave the Holy Ghost. And from hence it is clear that the Holy Ghost is given, not merely by grace making us acceptable (to God), but also by grace given freely, as is the power of remitting sins, which is given to priests even in mortal sin, when they are ordained. For the Holy Ghost is the primary author of grace who works in the sacrament, and by it remits sins, even though its minister be an ungodly man. Whence Cyril and Chrysostom thus expound the passage, Receive the Holy Ghost, that is, the power of remitting sin by the Holy

Ghost, co-operating with you in that sacrament and remitting sins. And again, by the Holy Ghost you must understand with S. Augustine (*in loc.*), and S. Ambrose (*Serm. x. in Ps. cxviii. [cxix.]*), the very grace and charity of the Holy Ghost. For this was infused into the Apostles more fully and abundantly, and is likewise by the power of the sacrament of order infused into priests at their ordination (unless they put an obstacle and choose to continue in their sins, and refuse to be contrite for their past sins), so that they may duly and without sin administer the sacrament of penitence, and absolve sinners. For a priest who absolves others ought to be free from sin; if not, he is guilty of sin, and yet truly absolves sinners. From these words it is clear that the Holy Ghost has the primary and highest power of forgiving sins, and that He communicated this power to the Apostles, and accordingly that He Himself is truly God. (So S. Basil, *Lib. v. contra Eunomium*; S. Ambrose, *Lib. iii. ch. 19, de Spirito Sancto*, and S. Chrysostom, *Hom. vi. on 2 Cor.*) The same power is indeed common to the whole Holy Trinity, but specially belongs to the Holy Ghost, as do Goodness and Love, and all the work of sanctification, just as Power specially belongs to the Father, and to the Son Wisdom, and all its works.

2. Observe that the Holy Ghost and His power of remitting sins are here given them, not only for their own sakes, as about to be judges of sinners in the tribunal of penitence, but also for the sake of penitent sinners themselves. And consequently the same power is given even to wicked priests when they are ordained, as the power of judging in a secular court can be given to a wicked judge. But yet if they dispose themselves by penitence to the right reception of the Sacrament of Ordination, they will receive therein the Holy Ghost even to their own sanctification, to make them the more fit to sanctify others (penitents, for instance), as was here done to the Apostles.

3. S. Cyril (and Maldonatus after him) remarks that the Holy Ghost was here conferred on S. Thomas, even though absent, and with it the consequent power of remitting sins, just as the spirit of prophecy was given by Moses to Eldad and Medad who were absent. But the contrary opinion seems more true. For Thomas was then unbelieving and incapable of receiving the Holy Spirit, and accordingly the Holy Ghost was given him on the eighth day when Christ appeared to him, and converted him by showing him His wounds. So Toletus, Ribera, and others.

Lastly, notice this act of Christ as an example for ecclesiastical ceremonies. Christ, by the ceremony of breathing on them, gave the Apostles the Holy Ghost and the power of remitting sins. Therefore ecclesiastical ceremonies are not useless, frivolous, and superstitious, but seemly, efficacious, and sacred.

Ver. 23.—*Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.* Calvin twists and turns this to make it mean the preaching of the Gospel, namely, that they to whom ye preach the Gospel, if they believe it, will have their sins forgiven by their mere belief. But every one sees that this explanation is strained, forced, foolish, and ridiculous. For in this way it would not be the Apostles, but believers themselves who would themselves remit their own sins, which is absurd. For no one is judge in his own case, or stands higher than himself, so as to remit his own sins. (2.) These two things, viz., preaching the Gospel and remitting sins, are clearly dissimilar and distinct, the one being the work of an

(says S. John) for brevity's sake, and because many of them are recorded by the other evangelists. So S. Thomas, Lyranus, Cajetan, Ribera, Toletus, and others.

S. John seems here to finish his Gospel, as S. Augustine says. The next chapter relates to the mysteries of the Church, and the primacy of S. Peter, to show how rapidly the disciples multiplied, over whom S. Peter was placed as Vicar. Jansenius considers, most improbably, that S. John added some things here, which subsequently occurred to him. But it would seem that the Holy Spirit, and John too, added them for an express purpose, and not merely from memory.

Ver. 31.—*But these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ (the long-promised Messiah), the Son of God: and that believing ye might have life (of grace here and glory hereafter) through His name, that is, through the merits and satisfaction of Christ, which are applied to us through the sacraments on our faith and obedience.*

We must therefore believe—

- (1.) That He is the Saviour of the world.
- (2.) The long-expected Messiah.
- (3.) That He is God the Son of God.
- (4.) That He will give eternal life to those who believe in, and obey Him.

“For,” as S. Gregory says, “He truly believes, who sets forth his belief in his life.”

Apostle in preaching, the other the judicial act of a judge. (3.) The Gospel must be preached to all: and consequently this absolution of Calvin's must be given even to all the wicked. But Christ wishes not that all sins should be remitted, but orders that some should be retained, and that the Apostles and their successors should be judges in this matter. (4.) Christ had already given the Apostles power to preach (Luke x. 1), and commanded them to preach to every creature. Why then should He repeat all this in such obscure and unintelligible words?

I say therefore, it is a matter of faith to understand this passage of the sacrament of penance, wherein the priest, as judge, remits not only the punishment but also the guilt of penitents who accuse themselves in confession. This is clear from the words themselves, all of which signify that a judicial power of remitting or retaining sins was here given to the Apostles as judges in the tribunal of conscience. For so all the Fathers and the whole Church in every age understood the words. See Council of Trent, sess. xiv. can. 3 and 1. Bellarmine quotes the testimonies of the Fathers (*De Pœnit.* iii 2), and amongst them S. Gregory, who says, “They hold the chief place in the Divine judgment, so as in the place of God to retain some men's sins, and remit the sins of others.”

The meaning then is, “I give you by the Spirit the power of Order, which a man can have even when in sin, and I confer on you at the same time grace and sanctification, to enable you to exercise this power in a worthy and holy manner, not merely for the salvation of others, but also for your own. And ye will really remit sins as my ministers, and not merely announce that they are remitted, and whosoever sins ye retain, either with some, because they do not come to you, or others because ye will consider them undeserving of absolution, are retained in heaven by God.”

You may say, Cyril explains this passage as speaking of the preaching of the Gospel. I reply, Cyril does not explain these latter words, as speaking of the preaching of the Gospel, but the former words, “As the Father sent Me, even so send I you.” But you will say again, Cyril says that sins are remitted in two ways, by Baptism and repentance. But I reply, “This is true, but not to the point. Christ is properly speaking of the tribunal of Penance, but Cyril extends His words to include Baptism. Christ is here speaking of the judicial remission of sins, which is to be had specially, not in Baptism, but in the sacrament of Penance only.” See S. Chrysostom (*Lib.* iii. and vi. *De Sacerdotio*), where he shows that priests are of higher honour than not only kings but even angels, who have not the power of remitting sins.

Moreover, Christ by here instituting the tribunal of Penance, sanctioned, in this very way, Sacramental Confession, and enjoins it by Divine right. For sins cannot be remitted in this tribunal unless they are known, nor can they be known, unless they are confessed, for they are frequently secret; nay more, hidden in the mind. It is therefore necessary that the penitent should

act as his own accuser, and should be at the same time a criminal, an accuser, and a witness against himself, and should humbly ask pardon of the priest, as his judge, for the sins whereof he accuses himself, and for which he is penitent. But if the priest sees that he is truly penitent, he will pronounce the sentence of absolution, and will, in the Name of Christ, as His Vicar, pardon all his sins. For Christ ratifies the sentence of His priest, and pardons everything which His priest pardons, and what he retains, Christ also retains. For Christ in the Gospel often bids men to repent of their sins. But this they should do in the way which Christ instituted, that is, by submitting to the Sacrament of Penance, that is, by confessing their sins to the priest, and asking him for absolution. See Council of Trent, sess. xiv. cap. v. Cajetan therefore is wrong in saying that Confession is not here enjoined. This error is a heresy since that Council, but Cajetan lived before it.

And whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained. This does not signify merely a refusal of absolution, but positive power. For it means, Those whom ye count unworthy of absolution, on account of their unfitness, whom ye reject, and consider guilty of sin, and deserving of hell, God will judge in like manner, who alone primarily and by His own authority forgives or retains sins. It belongs to God alone to condemn an offence against Himself. But in this matter He appoints priests to be as it were His Vicars. See Matt. xviii. 18. If a priest sees that a penitent has not serious sorrow for his sins, or no serious purpose of amendment, as refusing, *e.g.*, to give up his concubine, or other occasions of sin, or who will not restore the good name or the wealth which he has stolen from his neighbour, the priest ought to refuse such a one absolution, to judge that he is unfit for absolution, and that he must abide in his sin, and incur the guilt of hell.

Lastly, observe that though the Apostles were ordained priests before His Passion, and at His last supper after the institution of the Eucharist with these words, *Do this, &c.*, yet they then received only the power of consecrating the Eucharist; but after Christ's resurrection they received from Him another power, that of remitting sins. These are two different powers, and can be divided and separated from each other. For Christ had this pre-eminent power of appointing priests in a different way from that in which they were afterwards to be appointed. For now in the ordination of priests the matter is the Chalice and Paten with the Bread and Wine, the form being, "Receive thou power to offer sacrifice." And when the bishop delivers these vessels to any one, pronouncing these words, he makes him a perfect priest, and confers on him both the power of remitting sins and also of offering sacrifice. So that when he says afterwards, "Receive thou power to remit, sins" these words are not of the essence of the form, but merely declare the power which was given in those former words. (See Soto, *Contr. Paludanem in iv. Dist. 24, Quæst. i., art. 4;* and Gregory de Valentia, *Tract de Ordine, disp. 9, Quæst. 1, punct. 5.*)

Ver. 24.—*But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didimus, was not with them when Jesus came.* Didymus means a twin. See notes on chap. xi. 16. But here he is so called (double, doubtful) because he wavered and doubted as to Christ's resurrection. He was at that time weaker than the other Apostles, but afterwards (after Christ again appeared) was bolder and more full of faith than all of them, inasmuch as he alone

Hence S. Gregory (*Hom. xxvi.*), S. Hilary (*de Trinit. lib. xii.*), and S. Augustine (*in loc.*), say that Thomas saw one thing and believed another: he saw that Christ had risen, he believed that He was God, and consequently had raised Himself. By touching My human nature which has been raised (Christ would say) thou hast believed My Godhead which lay hid within, and which raised it up. For the resurrection of Christ had confirmed all His teachings, one of which was that He was the Messiah the Son of God, who would die on the cross for the salvation of men, and on the third day rise again. All which Thomas believed. Again, that which comes under our senses, which we see and touch, we can believe on divine authority, but for another formal reason. We see a thing because we behold it with our eyes, but we believe it because God has revealed it, especially if our senses can err, or if the matter involve anything which is not seen, as was the case with the resurrection of Christ, which was already past, for Thomas here doubted and was convinced of Christ's resurrection.

Thou wilt reply, that S. Augustine says, *Tract xl.* (on S. John), Faith is believing what thou seest not. I answer, This is true in the sense that the chief material objects of faith are such as cannot be seen. But the formal object of faith, that is to say, divine revelation, is always of such a kind, that is to say invisible. And therefore Thomas, so far as he beheld Christ, did not formally believe it. But because he saw and heard Christ, when raised, assert the same thing, he believed God, who by the mouth of Christ and the Apostles, stated and revealed to him that it was no phantom in the form of Christ (as he had before supposed), but Christ Himself who had really risen and appeared to the Apostles. Just as we say, "Because thou hast seen miracles, because thou hast heard the Gospel preached, therefore thou hast believed." The word *therefore* does not signify the reason or the formal cause of belief (for that is only the Divine Revelation), but only the predisposing cause which moves us to believe.

But thirdly, the words can be explained as signifying merely assent, and not properly faith. Just as we believe the things we see and know. So Toletus. Hear S. Gregory: "He touched the man, and confessed Him to be God;" and Theophylact, "He who before was unbelieving, showed himself, after he had touched His side, to be an excellent theologian, in asserting the twofold nature, and the one Person of Christ. For by calling Him Lord he confessed His human nature, and by calling Him God he confessed the divine Nature in one and the same Person."

Ver. 30.—*And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book.* Both through His whole life, and specially after His resurrection (say S. Chrysostom and Theophylact). These latter in the presence of the Apostles only, the others before all the people. Besides these signs which I have just recorded, others were wrought to confirm the truth of the resurrection. And these I have omitted

Bernard, S. Francis, and others, have longed to enter through that wound into the heart of Christ. See S. Bernard, *Serm.* lxii. *in Cant.*

Ver. 28.—*Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God.* This was after he had fully ascertained that it was indeed Christ Himself, who had received these wounds on the cross, and who was now alive again. See Tertullian, *de Anima*, cap. xxviii.; S. Ambrose, *in Ps.* xlili. (xliv.); S. Hilary, *de Trinit. Lib.* iii.; S. Cyril, xii. 58; S. Gregory, *Hom.* xxvi.

My Lord and my God. That is, Thou art my Lord and my God. Thus showing that He was Very and true God by nature. Thomas here humbly and penitently confesses and condemns his former incredulity, with great profession of faith, hope, penitence, and love. By the word “Lord” he confesses Christ’s human nature, by the word “God” His divine nature. “I,” he would say, “because I believed not that thou wast God, did not believe that Thou hadst risen. But now I both believe that Thou art God, and that by the power of Thy Godhead Thou didst raise Thy Body to life again.” So St. Hilary (*Lib.* vii. *de Trinit.*) and S. Ambrose (*in Ps.* xlili.), who also adds that the word “Lord” signifies that Christ is our Redeemer as having purchased us by His Blood, and thus becoming our Lord by the right of purchase and redemption. By these words, Suarez says that Thomas offered Christ the adoration of *Latria*. As S. Augustine said, “He saw and touched the man,” &c. (see above on ver. 27). Consequently the fifth Œcumenical Council (*in Constit. Vigiliæ Papæ*) anathematise Theodore of Mopsuestia, who maintained that these words were not a confession of Christ’s Godhead, but merely an expression of astonishment. Note the words, “My Lord,” &c. For though Christ is the Lord and God of all, yet He is especially mine, having as the good Shepherd sought me, as a sheep that was lost, and I love and venerate Him in return from my inmost soul, as specially my Lord and my God. Thou, O Jesus, art my God and my Lord, because by these Thy wounds, which I have now touched, and know to be most real, Thou hast procured and obtained for me that faith with which I believe that Thou hast really risen, and this hope of obtaining grace and glory through the merit of Thy wounds, and such fervent charity as to love Thee most ardently as my God and Lord, and to offer and devote myself entirely to Thee as Thy servant for ever, so as henceforth to wish to do nothing, but that which pleases, lauds, and glorifies Thee. Would that I could lay open and breathe forth this my heartfelt feeling to the whole world! Would that I could proclaim and set forth to all the world this my faith, hope, and love towards Thee! Thus S. Francis frequently used to say, “My God and my all;” and the Royal Prophet, “What have I in heaven but Thee,” &c., *Ps.* lxxiii. 24.

Ver. 29.—*Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen Me* (that is, touched and thus surely known), *thou hast believed. Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed,* Because there “faith has greater merit, where human reason does not afford a test,” says S. Gregory. He used the past tense, because many had already believed, but does not exclude the present and the future. They both are, and will be blessed, who believe in Me, without seeing. S. Augustine (*in loc.*) adds that they who will believe, did already believe in God’s foreknowledge and predestination. But this remark is more subtle and acute than solid.

traversed nearly the whole world in preaching the Gospel. Stapleton (*de Vita Thomæ*) says that he went to the furthest part of India, to Abyssinia and China, and even to America.

Was not with them. S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius suppose that having fled away with the other Apostles, he had not yet returned. But S. Augustine, Bede, Lyranus, D. Thomas, and others say in reply that he was with the other Apostles when the two disciples returned from Emmaus, but that he disbelieved their story, and went away. It is supposed that when S. Luke says (xxiv. 11), “their words seemed to them as idle tales,” he was referring to S. Thomas.

Ver. 25.—*The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.*

Thomas sinned in this—(1) by unbelief, (2) by obstinacy, (3) by pride, (4) by irreverence (for when all the other Apostles said that He had risen, he obstinately stood out, and refused to believe, (5) by presumption, because he would not believe, unless he thrust his hands into the wounds (canst thou then presume, O Thomas, to lay down laws for Christ?), (6) by persisting in this unbelief for eight days when, it may be, the Mother of Christ urged him to believe—to be not merely unbelieving as to the mode of the resurrection (as S. Ambrose supposes), but even as to its truth, as though the other Apostles were taken in and deceived, having seen only a ghost or phantom, and not Christ Himself (See Origen, *Lib.* ii. *Contr. Celsum*; S. Augustine, *Lib.* xvi. *Contra Faust. cap.* 33; and S. Gregory, *Hom.* xxvi.)

Besides, this unbelief of S. Thomas’ arose partly from his not believing Christ to be God. For had he believed this, he would easily have understood that Christ could have raised His Body to life again, and it is surprising that Cyril should say that Thomas believed Him to be God; and it partly arose from His excessive sorrow, especially because he alone had not seen Christ at the same time as the other Apostles. This wounded him much, and caused him to utter these bitter words. So Cyril, xii. 57. But God allowed it to be thus, in order that Thomas and we should be confirmed in humility, and in belief in the resurrection by this fresh appearance of Christ. So S. Gregory, *Hom.* xxvi., S. Augustine, *Serm.* clxi. (*opus spurium*), and others.

The print. In Vulgate, *fixura*, “the driving in” the mark which the nails made. (Pseudo)-Augustine (*Serm.* clix.) says, “He was seeking for the hands and the side, and while he was too curiously (dwelling on the wounds, he risked the death of his faith. The Lord wished him to see Him lest he should lose his soul by unbelief.”

Ver. 26.—*And after eight days.* The eighth day after the Lord's resurrection, the Octave of the Passover, when we commemorate this mystery, and read this Gospel. And from this S. Cyril observes that the Apostles, from these appearances of Christ, began from this time to hold the assemblies of the Church on the Lord's day, and to consecrate it, as it were, because He rose on that day, and thus guided the Apostles to observe the Lord's day instead of the Sabbath.

Again His disciples where within, in that upper chamber before mentioned. It is therefore far from probable, as S. Jerome (in Matt. ult.), Rupertus, and Ribera here suppose, that Christ appeared to S. Thomas and the Apostles, not in Jerusalem, but in Galilee, where He afterwards appeared, not only to the Apostles, but to all the disciples.

And Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst and said, Peace be unto you. Notice here, the wondrous condescension of Christ, who, in order to convert this unbelieving and obstinate Thomas, offered Himself a second time, not only to be seen, but also to be handled by him. And this He did, not for his sake only, but for the sake of the other Apostles, to strengthen both them and us also in the belief of His resurrection.

Ver. 27.—*Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side.* Behold the kindness of Christ in humbling Himself to all Thomas' requests, and in all things complying with his wishes, in order to convert him. See, says S. Chrysostom, how for one single soul He displays His wounds, and because he was somewhat dull of comprehension seeks to give him proof by means of the dullest of his senses, I mean his touch.

And be not faithless, but believing. Thou thinkest, forsooth, that I did not know what thou saidst of Me when I was not present. But rest assured that I knew, and was present to hear thy words of unbelief. Do then as thou hast said, I offer thee My wounded hands and side to touch and handle, nay more, that thou mayest measure them with thy hand, that so thou mayest lay aside thy unbelief, and believe henceforth that I have risen, I the very same that hung on the Cross, and no other. And in this way Christ heals another wound of unbelief, for He shows that He knows even all secrets, and is a searcher of hearts, and consequently God. He therefore radically cures the disease, for Thomas did not believe that Christ had risen, because he did not believe Him to be God.

It may be asked whether Thomas really touched Christ's wounds. The Gloss doubts it. Euthymius denies it. But S. Augustine (*in loc.*) thinks the contrary. For he says, "He saw and touched the man, and confessed the God, whom he neither saw nor touched; but by means of that which he saw and touched, his doubts were all removed and he believed. So, too, S. Cyril, Theophylact, and Bede, and S. Chrysostom seems to be of the same opinion. Nor can it be thought that when the Lord said, "Reach hither thy finger," John would have omitted to state, if this had not been done, and that Thomas believed without having touched Him.

Besides, this was an express command, which Thomas doubtless obeyed. And He intended to leave thus a convincing proof of His resurrection to believers of all ages. Whence S. Augustine (*Serm. cxlvii. [al. ccxlii.]*), "He wished to exhibit in His flesh the scars of His wounds to some who doubted, to heal the wound of their unbelief." And S. Ambrose (*in ult. Lucæ*), "He would teach me by His touch, as Paul also taught." Hear S. Gregory (*Hom. xxvi.*): "This took place not by chance, but by Divine ordering. For the mercy of God wrought in wondrous wise, so that the doubting disciple, by touching the wounds in his Master's body, healed in us the wounds of unbelief. For the unbelief of Thomas availed more to confirm our faith, than even the faith of the disciples who believed. For while he is by his touch brought back to belief, our mind, putting aside all doubt, is confirmed in the faith." Again [Pseudol Augustine, *Serm. clxi. [clxxii. in Append.]*], "Thomas being a holy, believing, and righteous man, carefully inquired into all these points, not as having any doubt himself, but to do away with the slightest suspicion of unbelief. For it would have sufficed for his own faith to have seen Him whom he knew. But it was for us that he brought it about that he touched Him whom he beheld. So that we might perchance say that our eyes were deceived, but we could not say that our hands had missed their mark. For we might have some doubt as to what we see in the dazzling glory of the resurrection, but we can have no doubt as to what we touch."

But it may be urged, Christ said, "*See My hands.*" He did not say, Touch My hands. "Thomas therefore saw, but did not touch them." I answer, By seeing is meant, you may see by your very touch—may know assuredly that I who was crucified have risen—the very same person. "The sight," says S. Augustine (*in loc.*), "is a kind of general sense, and the noblest of all," and is here taken for any sense, even that of touch. See notes on Ex. xx. 10.

2. But it is said, "The glorified Body of Christ is subtile, and cannot be touched." S. Cyril, Chrysostom, Leontius, Theophylact say that it was by divine ordering here touched by Thomas, to furnish proof of the resurrection. For this kind of resistance, which exists in a body (wherewith one body resists another, and is, therefore capable of being touched) which is the property of bulk, is in the power of Christ and the Blessed, so as to remain, or be taken away by God, as they wish. And so also as regards their visibility, so that Christ was seen when He wished it, and not seen when He did not wish it. See notes on Luke ult. ver. 39.

This finger of St. Thomas is said to be preserved, with many other relics, in the Church of Santa Croce at Rome.

From Christ's own words, "Thrust thy hand into My side," it appears that this wound was very large, and Thomas, astonished that this wound was inflicted for him, exclaimed "*My Lord and my God.*" Many Saints, as S.