

Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle – July 3, 2018 – Very Rev. Bryan W. Jerabek, J.C.L.
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St. Thomas the Apostle doubted – and so have probably all of us. Doubts are not a terribly uncommon thing and we should not panic if we have them. But Thomas also shows us how to deal with them effectively: he earnestly sought to find the answer. He did not just leave his doubts hanging; he did not simply walk away from them, either. And when he found the answer, he professed his faith boldly and confidently: “My Lord and my God!” How do we handle our doubts?

Doubts about our faith can make us feel nervous or weak. And who wants to be nervous or weak? But that is a negative way of viewing doubts. It would be better to see them as opportunities: to go deeper and get stronger. We should never leave our doubts hanging; much less should we walk away from them. Rather, we should wrestle with them and seek answers. And when we do get those answers, we become more confident in who we are as Catholics and what we believe.

Yes, we need to wrestle. Take your doubts to prayer. Go to the Catechism and to other reliable books. Gentlemen, Wikipedia is not enough; we do not need “Wikipedia Catholics”! Speak with priests and others who can be trusted to hand on faithfully the Church’s teaching. And then go back to prayer. Wrestle with the Lord over your doubts. Wrestling with God only has one outcome: he wins. He will help you find the answers. He will strengthen your faith and give you a deeper understanding. He will give you a confident faith.

Think of the most beautiful old churches you’ve ever seen. Carved wood, gold leaf, marble, incredible stained glass, statues that look like they could come alive... these were built by men and women of confident faith! In Alabama there is a town called Cullman, settled mostly by German Catholics. They built the church on the highest point in the central city, with two towers and gilt crosses on top. The gold of the crosses catches the light and everyone sees the church as they drive into town. Did those German Catholics lack confidence? Certainly not!

Catholics who lack confidence in who they are and what they believe are one of the biggest problems in our Church today. They are often the ones who end up wanting to water down Church teaching to make it easier; they want to make deals with the world; they want to say that all religions are basically the same, and that as long as you are “basically good”, you will go to heaven. My brothers, we call that “snake oil”: it is poison! It’s not what we believe. It is not what Jesus has revealed to us. It is not what his Church teaches us.

No, we want to know our faith and be confident in it! If you have doubts along the way, don’t worry – but seek to resolve them. Think of our first reading: St. Paul tells us that we are “members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone... In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” Lord, thank you for my Catholic faith! Help me to be strong in it! Conquer my doubts and build me up in your Spirit!

As we go forth from this Fraternus Ranch, my prayer is that we are not only stronger in who we are as men, but who we are as sons of God – as Catholic men. We have been given a great treasure. The Catholic Church, down through the ages, has elevated every culture it has come in contact with and brought out the best in believers. We have a great gift to share; may we be confident in it. (If you older boys and men want a fine book to read in this regard, I highly recommend “How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization”, by Thomas Woods.)

Paratum cor meum, Deus. Paratum cor meum! My heart is ready, O God. My heart is ready! Through the intercession of St. Thomas the Apostle, may the Lord dispel every doubt in our hearts and fill us with a confident faith. Praised be Jesus Christ – now and for ever. Amen.