

## FIRST FRIDAY HOLY HALF HOUR

**FIRST FRIDAY Date: July 3 2015**

**Title for Reflection: Celebrating the Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle of India (*My Lord and my God! John 20:28*)**

### **Opening Hymn:**

**Leader: (Introduction):** Little is recorded of St. Thomas the Apostle, nevertheless thanks to the Gospel of John his personality is clearer to us than that of some others of the Twelve. His name occurs in all the lists of the Synoptics (Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6, cf. Acts 1:13), but in St. John he plays a distinctive part. God performed many miracles through Thomas to help the people with whom Thomas shared the Gospel message -- in Syria, Persia, and India -- believe, according to Christian tradition. Right before his death in 72 AD, Thomas stood up to an Indian king (whose wife had become a Christian) when he pressured Thomas to make religious sacrifices to an idol. Miraculously, the idol shattered into pieces when Thomas was forced to approach it. The king was so enraged that he ordered his high priest to kill Thomas, and he did: Thomas died from being pierced by a spear, but was reunited with Jesus in heaven.

Let us ask for the intercession of St. Thomas during this holy half hour that our doubting faith may lead us to a strong undying belief in Jesus Christ.

### **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament:**

**Leader:** Call for silence (*Silence for atleast 2 mins*)

**Leader:** Dear Friends the bread is Christ's body, the cup is Christ's blood. If you, therefore, are Christ's body and members, it is your own mystery that is placed on the Lord's Table. Let us spend a few moments silently in the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament asking for his grace to recognize Christ in the every person we meet. (*Silence 1 min*)

**Scripture Reading: John 20: 24- 29**

### **Reflection:**

Jesus blesses people who are willing to have faith in something that they can't see right now: "Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'" (John 20:29). Thomas' encounter with Jesus shows how the right response to doubt -- curiosity and searching -- can lead to deep belief.

His inquisitive mind led him to naturally doubt God's work in the world, but also led him to pursue answers to his questions, which ultimately led him to great faith. Thomas is known in popular culture as "Doubting Thomas" because of the famous Bible story in which he demands to see physical proof of Jesus' resurrection before believing it, and Jesus appears, inviting

Thomas to touch the scars of his wounds from the crucifixion. When you are in doubt, remember Thomas too doubted.

**Hymn: If we live it's for the Lord (Verses 1&2) or any suitable hymn**

**Leader:** As we move to the intercessory prayers, let us place before the Lord our sincere petitions that we may be emulators of his Passion, Death and Resurrection bearing in mind that the Eucharist is truly the Source and Summit of our life and our families. Our response is...

**Response: Lord, hear our prayer.**

1. That our Pope, Bishops and Priest may celebrate every Eucharist with deep faith and be shining examples to the flock they lead, *we pray to the Lord*
2. That we as a community may never take the Eucharistic Celebration for granted but grow in deeper love for Christ each time we partake in its celebration, *we pray to the Lord*
3. That all those who have left the Church may feel a sense of emptiness without the Eucharist and be drawn back to the richness of our faith, *we pray to the Lord*
4. That each time we lack faith and doubt God we may be inspired by St. Thomas where his doubting faith led him to great belief, *we pray to the Lord*

**Leader:** Heavenly Father, we place all our petitions before you in deep faith. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen

**Benediction Hymn: Let us bow in adoration**

**Divine Praises:**

**Concluding Hymn: It takes courage or any other hymn of thanksgiving**

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## FIRST FRIDAY HOLY HALF HOUR

**FIRST FRIDAY Date:** August 7 2015

**Title for Reflection:** *'If you wish to be my disciple take up your cross and follow me'. The simple priesthood of St. Jean-Marie Vianney changed a town and a world*

**Opening Hymn:** This world you have made is a beautiful place or any other suitable hymn

**Leader: (Introduction):** A man with vision overcomes obstacles and performs deeds that seem impossible. John Vianney was a man with vision: He wanted to become a priest. But he had to overcome his meager formal schooling, which inadequately prepared him for seminary studies.

His failure to comprehend Latin lectures forced him to discontinue. But his vision of being a priest urged him to seek private tutoring. After a lengthy battle with the books, John was ordained.

Situations calling for “impossible” deeds followed him everywhere. As pastor of the parish at Ars, John encountered people who were indifferent and quite comfortable with their style of living. His vision led him through severe fasts and short nights of sleep to make Ars a vibrant parish.

### **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament:**

**Leader:** Call for silence (*Silence for at least 2 mins*)

**Leader:** Dear Friends many people look forward to retirement and taking it easy, doing the things they always wanted to do but never had the time. But John Vianney had no thoughts of retirement. As his fame spread, more hours were consumed in serving God's people. Even the few hours he would allow himself for sleep were disturbed frequently. Let us ask God for this grace of selfless service to his church and community (*Silence 1 min*)

### **Scripture Reading: (1 Cor: 4:1-5)**

#### **Reflection:**

John Vianney would say, “Private prayer is like straw scattered here and there: If you set it on fire, it makes a lot of little flames. But gather these straws into a bundle and light them, and you get a mighty fire, rising like a column into the sky; public prayer is like that.”

Indifference toward religion, coupled with a love for material comfort, seem to be common signs of our times as it was in John Vianney's time. A person from another planet observing us would not likely judge us to be pilgrim people, on our way to somewhere else. John Vianney, on the

other hand, was a man on a journey with his goal before him at all times. Do your actions reflect that you are a part of a ‘Pilgrim People’?

**Hymn: Lord you are my everything or any suitable hymn**

**Leader:** Heavenly Father, you have called priests to serve your people in the name of your son Jesus, the High Priest. As we thank you for their sacrifices and their work, we pray that you may always protect them from harm and evil and continue to inspire them in their ministries. As we lift them up to you... Our response is...

**Response: Gracious Lord, hear our prayer**

1. That like St. John Vianney, Pope Francis, the Bishops, Priests and Religious all over the world may bring people closer to God through their prayer and celebration of the Eucharist; ....*we pray to the Lord*

2. That like St. Paul, the Church may be blessed with vocations and priests who are always identified by their union with Christ and the Holy Spirit, *we pray to the Lord*

3. That priests experiencing storms in their vocation, or those who are suffering ill-health or losing faith in their capabilities may rediscover the presence of Jesus, the High Priest as they serve in his name, *we pray to the Lord*

4. That priests who have died may enjoy eternal life and be blessed for the goodness they reflected in their ministries, *we pray to the Lord*

5. For our personal and local needs; we pray to the Lord

**Leader:** Lord, as we thank you for our priests and seek your blessings on them, we also appreciate all that they do for us, inspired by your son Jesus who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God forever and ever. Amen.

**Benediction Hymn: Let us bow in adoration**

**Divine Praises:**

**Concluding Hymn: Jean-Marie Vianney or Keep them we pray thee dearest Lord or any other hymn of thanksgiving**

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