

**‘Blessed Are They that Have not Seen, and yet Have Believed’
(John 20, 29)**

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Abstract

Thomas-Didymus (a cognomen, which actually means "the twin") was one of the twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ, according to the New Testament (cf. Matthew 10, 2-4, Mark 3, 16-19, Luke 6, 13-16, Acts 1, 13). He is casually called "doubting Thomas" because he doubted Jesus' Resurrection when first told (in the Gospel of John, chap. 20), followed later by his famous confession of faith: "My Lord and my God". Traditionally, he is said to have travelled outside the Roman Empire to preach the Gospel, in Persia and India, where he died as a Christian martyr. In the Gospel of John, Thomas first speaks when Lazarus had recently died, the apostles do not wish to go back to Judea, where some Jews had attempted to stone Jesus: "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (11, 16). Then, he speaks again after Jesus had just explained that he was going away to prepare a heavenly place for his followers, and that one day they would join Him there. Thomas reacted by saying, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" (14, 5). Finally, Saint John the Theologian tells how doubting Thomas was skeptical at first when he heard that Jesus had Risen from the dead and appeared to the other apostles. But when Jesus appeared later and invited Thomas to touch his wounds and behold him, Thomas showed his belief and Jesus blessed him (20, 24-29). The theological interpretation of the episode has concentrated on it as a demonstration of the reality of the Resurrection, but as early as the writings of the 4th and 5th century Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Basil the Great and Saint Cyril of Alexandria it had been given a Eucharistic interpretation, seen as an allegory of the sacrament of the Eucharist, what remained a recurring theme in the patristic commentaries. The conclusion of these episodes ("Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have

believed” - John 20, 29) remain an example of undoubting faith for all the future generations of believers in Jesus Christ, the Resurrected Son of God, and likewise for the readers of the Gospel.