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*Then the other disciple also went in,
the one who had arrived at the tomb first,
and he saw and believed.*

JOHN 20:8

Seeing Is Believing

Clever phrase. But is it accurate? Believing means that we sometimes accept as true something for which we have no positive proof. We might base our belief on the word of someone we consider reliable, but we ourselves have no undeniable evidence. We may use this phrase in everyday conversation and know what we really mean, but when it comes to the resurrection of Jesus, the phrase “seeing is believing” really doesn’t fit well.

In today’s first reading, Peter states that Jesus was visible to some of his followers. What does this mean? It’s clear from most of the Easter narratives that many people had a profound, life-transforming experience of the risen Jesus. They may not have realized this at first, but they were convinced of it when he allowed them to recognize him. Was it a visual experience? Was it auditory as Paul describes (Acts 9:4)? Or was it

touch as Thomas demanded (John 20:25)? Every mystic describes a revelation of Christ as an experience of one or more senses. For example, St. Bernadette saw our Lady, while St. Francis heard a voice. This isn’t to say that the revelations weren’t real. It is to say that our senses are our only way of experiencing it or talking about it. We are, after all, only human.

Maybe when referring to the resurrection we should modify this phrase: believing is seeing or hearing or feeling or being somehow convinced that he is really here. And this can be true for all of us.

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

For Reflection

- * *Have you ever had a moment of profound religious insight? If so, how would you describe it?*
- * *The risen Christ is with us still. Think about that for a moment.*

