

Congressman Willard Duncan Vandiver, from Missouri, in a speech at a Naval banquet in 1899 in Philadelphia is reported to have said:

*“I come from a state that raises corn and cotton and cockleburs and Democrats, and frothy eloquence neither convinces nor satisfies me. I am from Missouri. You have got to show me.”*

And from that was born the unofficial motto of the State of Missouri - namely, “The Show-Me State.”

We can often and easily get overwhelmed by excessive words ... or as Congressman Vandiver called it - frothy eloquence. The enthusiastic telemarketer on the phone, who knows our first name ... and mispronounces our last name. The sales person who doesn't understand that “just looking,” means ... just ... looking. The politician who makes a rousing speech one day calling us all on to higher values; and the next day is in the headlines for their ... shockingly ... low ... living.

It used to be you could trust someone on their word. But now it would seem that words are nothing more than empty air ... a leaf on the breeze ... a waste of breath.

In today's Gospel we hear the story of “Doubting Thomas.”

I think Thomas got a bum rap. In the Emmaus story, we hear of the disciples who didn't even know that it was Jesus talking to them on the road. They spoke of how some of the women had wild stories. They didn't believe at first. Or of Peter and John, who after listening to Mary Magdalene, ran to the tomb - and after seeing ... THEN they believed.

But nobody talks about the doubting disciples on the road to Emmaus. Nor did Peter or John end up with the nick-name “doubting.”

But such is history, and 2,000 years later - we have, as it were, “doubting Thomas.”

Yet as Catholics, we tend to be a rather believing lot. In the Creed, we say “We believe in God the Father almighty” ... “in Jesus Christ His only Son Our Lord,” ... “in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the resurrection of the Body, ... [in] Life everlasting.”

But are we running on autopilot?

We believe in a life to come ... in angels, and saints ... in judgement ... in Heaven, Hell, in Purgatory. We believe God loves us. We believe that Jesus died for our sins ... and that He left us His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in the Holy Eucharist as an everlasting reminder of his Real Presence among us.

Do we really mean what we say?

Or is it just frothy eloquence? ... a bunch of hot air? Or do we ... REALLY ... believe.

It's not as if God left us hanging with insufficient evidence or without the faculties to grasp this. The three infused graces of Baptism are Faith, Hope, and Love. Supernatural graces - freely given to all of us ... in order to be able to do supernatural things.

[Today these young people will join us at the altar to receive their First Communion ... their First HOLY Communion. This isn't make-believe. This is real. This is more real than the person sitting next to you. This is the ultimate reality.]

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us make an act of Faith - "Lord I DO believe, help my unbelief!" ... to raise us up beyond our human powers ... to receive the supernatural helps - the divine assistance - that is freely offered to us in the generous outpouring of God's love, and grace, and mercy. And ask God to "show me" what I need to see, what I need to touch, what I need to believe. Let us "not be unbelieving, but believe" ... and let us believe, hope, and love ... with our whole heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. With God's help, let us become what we are called to be ... the sons and daughters of God the Father, redeemed in Jesus Christ, and filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit..