Introduction: A Cry That Echoes Through Time

Picture the scene: A locked upper room, an atmosphere thick with fear and confusion. Ten disciples in hiding, their hearts still pounding from the horror of the Cross and the wonder of the empty tomb. Suddenly, the risen Jesus stands among them. Peace. Unspeakable joy. But one is missing: Thomas, the twin, the skeptic, the one who needs to see to believe. A week later, the story repeats. Jesus appears again, and this time, He looks directly at Thomas. He doesn’t scold him—He offers His wounds: *“Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe”* (John 20:27). And then, the deepest truth erupts, the purest confession, the very heart of the Christian faith, bursting from the lips of a once-doubting man:

“My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28).

This cry is not just Thomas’s—it is the echo of every believer who has ever recognized, in awe and worship, the true identity of Jesus of Nazareth.

I. The Scene: Doubt, Encounter, and Revelation

To grasp the weight of these words, we must set the stage. Thomas had missed Jesus’ first appearance to the ten. His skepticism—*“Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe”* (John 20:25)—wasn’t mere stubbornness. It was the cry of a grieving heart, unable to fathom the Resurrection. Jesus, in His infinite mercy and divine pedagogy, does not reject Thomas for his doubt—He meets him *where he is*. He appears tangibly, offering the physical proof of His glorified Passion. This is no ghost—this is the same One who was nailed to the Cross, now alive, transformed.

II. “My Lord and My God”: A Theological Earthquake

Thomas’s confession is brief but theologically explosive—a jewel of divine revelation:

1. **“Kyrios” (My Lord):** In Jewish and Greco-Roman context, *“Kyrios”* was a title of absolute sovereignty. It was used for God Himself (translating the Hebrew *“Adonai,”* the reverential substitute for Yahweh). To call Jesus *“Kyrios”* was to acknowledge Him as

Master, Owner, and Sovereign of one’s life. It was a declaration of faith in His risen Lordship, fulfilling the prophecy that *“every knee shall bow… and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord”* (Philippians 2:10-11).

2. **“Theos” (My God):** Here lies the theological detonation. Thomas does not say *“a god”* or *“divine.”* He uses the unequivocal term **“Theos” (Θεός)**, the same word used for the One God of Israel in the Old Testament (LXX) and in John’s Gospel Prologue: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”* (John 1:1). By addressing Jesus as **“Theos,”** Thomas is declaring, under the Holy Spirit’s inspiration, **the full divinity of Jesus Christ.** He is not an exalted prophet or a mighty angel—He is God Himself, made flesh, now risen and present.
3. **The Possessive “My”:** This is no abstract statement. It is personal, intimate, a total surrender: *“My Lord and my God!”* It is the response of a heart that collapses in worship before the tangible evidence of Love incarnate, triumphant over death. It is mutual possession—belonging entirely to Him.

III. Jesus Is God: The Cornerstone of Faith

- **Against Arianism and Later Heresies:** This verse was a crucial weapon against heresies like Arianism (which denied Christ’s full divinity). The Church Fathers (St. Athanasius, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Augustine) cited it constantly: How could Thomas, a monotheistic Jew, call a mere man *“God”* without committing blasphemy? Only the reality of the Incarnation explains it.
- **Fulfillment of Revelation:** John structures his Gospel to progressively unveil Jesus’ identity—from *“the Lamb of God”* (John 1:29) to *“I AM”* (echoing Exodus 3:14)—culminating in Thomas’s explicit confession. This is the climax of Jesus’ self-revelation.
- **The Trinity in Action:** By calling Jesus *“God,”* Thomas confesses the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. The Father raises the Son by the Spirit’s power (Romans 8:11), and the risen Son reveals Himself as God. This is a profoundly Trinitarian moment.
- **The Catechism Affirms It:** *“The Church calls Thomas’s confession—’My Lord and my God!’—the Easter proclamation of faith. It is the first explicit confession of Christ’s divinity after the Resurrection”* (Compendium of the Catechism, 129).

IV. Why Is This Relevant TODAY? Overcoming a “Custom-Made God”

In a culture marked by relativism, subjective spirituality (*“I believe in something, but my way”*), and the temptation to reduce Jesus to a *“moral teacher”* or *“inspirational leader,”* John 20:28 is a necessary and thunderous reminder:

1. **Against Reductionism:** We cannot dilute Jesus. He is not just a good man—He is **God with us** (Emmanuel). His teachings carry absolute weight because they are God’s Word. His sacrifice has infinite value because it is God who offers Himself.
2. **The Basis of Worship:** Only God may be worshipped. If Jesus is not God, Eucharistic adoration, the Rosary, and processions would be idolatry. Thomas’s confession justifies and demands our worship of Christ.
3. **Hope Against Evil and Death:** If Jesus were only a man, His victory over death would be limited. But if He is God, His Resurrection guarantees *ours* and ensures the final defeat of sin and death. Our hope rests on divine foundations!
4. **An Answer to Modern Skepticism:** Like Thomas, many today demand *“proof.”* Jesus does not reject honest seeking. But true faith, when met with sufficient evidence (Scripture, Tradition, the Church, the saints, the Eucharist), must culminate in the same confession: *“My Lord and my God!”*

V. Practical Guide: Living “My Lord and My God!” in the 21st Century

How do we translate this profound theological truth into daily life? Here’s a theological-pastoral guide:

1. Cultivate Awe (Meditation)

- **Read and Re-Read John 20:** Meditate slowly on the scene. Imagine yourself there. Feel Thomas’s doubt, the shock of seeing Jesus, the emotion of his confession.
- **Contemplate the Wounds:** Christ’s wounds are proof of His boundless love and victory. In prayer, *“touch”* them spiritually—especially in the Eucharist (His given Body) and Confession (His healing Mercy).
- **Repeat the Confession:** Make Thomas’s words your own. Use them as a prayer throughout the day: *“My Lord and my God! I believe; help my unbelief.”*

2. Strengthen Your Faith (Formation)

- **Study the Foundations:** Learn why the Church believes in Christ’s divinity (Catechism, Councils like Nicaea and Chalcedon). Books like Benedict XVI’s *“Jesus of Nazareth”* are excellent.
- **Face Your Doubts:** Don’t fear questions. Seek answers from solid Catholic sources (priests, trusted theologians, good books, approved websites). A reasoned faith is unshakable.
- **Live the Liturgy:** Participate consciously in Mass. Every Eucharist is a new Upper Room where Christ becomes present. At Communion, whisper in your heart: *“My Lord and my God!”*

3. Act on Your Faith (Witness & Mission)

- **Acknowledge Him as “Lord” (Kyrios):* Examine your life—what areas have you not yet surrendered to Him? (Work, relationships, money, pleasures, time.) Make a daily act of surrender: *“Jesus, be the Lord of [name an area] today.”*
- **Worship Him as “God” (Theos):* Spend time in Eucharistic adoration. Simplify your prayer: Silent presence before Him *is* worship. Let your whole life be an act of worship (Romans 12:1).
- **Proclaim with Courage:** Don’t hide your faith. In a world that relativizes Christ, testify to His divinity through your life (charity, integrity, hope) and, when possible, your words. Share how believing Jesus is God transforms *you.*
- **Trust as a Child:** If He is God, His promises are certain, His power limitless, His mercy boundless. Bring your burdens, fears, and dreams to Him with childlike trust. *“Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit”* (Luke 23:46) was Jesus’ perfect surrender—let it model yours.

Conclusion: “Blessed Are Those Who Have Not Seen and Yet Believe”

Jesus responds to Thomas—and to us: *“Because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe”* (John 20:29). **We are those blessed ones.** We have not touched His physical wounds, but we have the apostles’ testimony, His real presence in the Eucharist, the Holy Spirit’s action, and the experience of His grace in our lives.

John 20:28 is not a verse of the past—it is an eternal call to the present. A call to

step out of our *“upper rooms”* of doubt, comfort, or fear. A call to fix our eyes on the risen Christ and, with the same clarity and fervor as Thomas, recognize His true identity. A call to kneel—not just physically, but with our whole being—and proclaim with renewed, vibrant, life-changing faith:

“MY LORD AND MY GOD!”

May this confession be the foundation of our lives, the light in our darkness, the strength in our weakness, and our unshakable hope as we journey toward our heavenly homeland. Amen.