

2nd Sunday of Easter B “The Wounded Healer”

Fr. Frank Schuster

I have a distant cousin, Pat Madsen, who was a stunt man in his youth. My folks told me once that he was a stunt double for William Shatner. How about that! Well, in 1973 Pat was performing a motorcycle stunt for a movie starring William Shatner called “X Factor”, a movie that I don’t know ever saw the light of day. Well, the motorcycle stunt went terribly bad, crippling Pat from the waist down. If you know anyone that has gone through this, you know how devastating it can be to know that you will need a wheel chair for the rest of your life. How did Pat respond to this awful situation? Pat decided that he was going to be a force for good in this world and became an advocate for people who suffer from spinal cord injury. He has been doing this for decades. If he finds out about someone in the hospital with this condition, he likes to visit these patients so to help them understand that the world doesn’t have to end because of their injury.

The thing about Pat is that he has a warm smile and wonderful sense of humor. When he talks about his motorbike tossing him into the air, he jokingly says he remembers thinking, “Beam me up Spock, oh wait, wrong movie!” Truth is: I believe he saved a lot of lives through his ministry. It is one thing to have able bodied doctors and therapists tell you that life will go on, and it is another thing to have someone like Pat roll up to your bed to tell you with warmth and compassion that life is a treasure worth fighting for. You see, Pat’s wounds are able to heal others. Let’s think about that for a moment. Wounds can have the power to heal.

My friends, Jesus appears before the eleven and what do we find? The Risen Lord has wounds, glorified wounds. Wounds that no longer hurt, but rather have become a source of strength, able to heal the world! Of course, wounds by themselves are stupid right? Wounds hurt. Straw poll: who here wants to be wounded, raise your hands? No one wants to be wounded. However, when we allow the Risen Lord into our lives, wounds no longer have to be stupid, festering, hurting cancers of the soul.

The Risen Lord can transform our wounds into glorified wounds, holy wounds, that can become a source of strength and healing to others if we only unite our suffering to Christ’s suffering and then unite his Resurrection to our own Easter hope. Then wounds no longer would have to suck us dry day after day. Through a relationship with Jesus, we can gain strength from accidents that befall us, or injustices committed against us, as much as we can learn from our own mistakes. Our transformed wounds can then become a source of strength and motivation, influencing us to do little things to help Jesus heal a wounded world.

My friends, what are your wounds? Think about it for a moment, what are your wounds? Now can you trust your wounds to Jesus? Ask yourself that, can you trust your wounds to Jesus? In the Gospel today, Jesus showed his wounds to Thomas. Now Thomas is an apostle and saint that many of us can relate with. Thomas was the one who said, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks

and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” And we can all relate with that. At times, we have had our doubts. Perhaps, more than a few people here this weekend come with hurts and doubts. Thomas is your patron saint today.

Now notice that Jesus waited a week before appearing before Thomas. For a wounded, hurting soul, a week can be a long time. In the Spirit Life, God does take his time. He waits for the perfect moment. He made the Hebrews wait 40 years, made them wander in the desert. St. Paul prayed that what he called the “thorn in his side” would be removed, and Jesus said, “No, my strength is manifested through your weakness”. My friends, authentic Christianity involves a cross to carry day by day. God want us to live with our wound for a while and waits until he knows our soul is ready for liberation. For Thomas, it took a week.

That next week, Thomas and the other disciples were in the upper room with the doors locked and Jesus appeared before them and said “Peace be with you”. He then showed Thomas his wounds. Jesus invited Thomas to touch his wounds. Now Thomas was a wounded, doubting soul. What was Jesus’ remedy for Thomas’ infirm soul? Jesus gave Thomas his wounds, his glorified wounds. And then Thomas, in awe, proclaims, “My Lord and my God”.

My friends, today is also Divine Mercy Sunday. St. Faustina had a vision of the Risen Lord which we have a copy on display in the narthex area. St. Faustina’s vision of the Risen Lord has a remarkable example of what glorified wounds mean. From the side of Christ, water and blood shine out like rays of the sun. The water represents the water of Baptism and the blood represents Holy Eucharist.

In St. Faustina’s diary about the origin of this Feastday, Jesus told her “...tell the whole world about My inconceivable mercy. I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon the souls who approach the Fount of My Mercy. On that day all the divine floodgates through which graces flow are opened. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet.... Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the Fount of My Mercy”. (Diary 699)

Under the image is St. Faustina’s prayer that I believe we should all pray when we have doubts or hurts. Jesus I trust in you. Jesus I trust in you. I don’t know where my life is going. Jesus I trust in you. I may be racked with sinfulness, but Jesus I trust in you. I may be wounded by the sins of others, Jesus I trust in you. My life may seem like it is crumbling all around me, but Jesus I trust in you. Christians, we need to simply trust that Jesus knows what he is doing and won’t let us become lost forever, if we just simply trust. You see, Thomas was wounded and doubtful. He was wounded by the grief caused by the events he experienced the previous week. And Jesus made him live with his wounds for a time. And then Jesus appeared before him and gave Thomas his glorified wounds.

We all have wounds and doubts. We need to be cleansed by the healing touch of God's love and forgiveness. We need to come to the altar with our aches and hurts. We need to contemplate the insight that St. Thomas and my cousin Pat discovered, that wounds can have the power to heal. This Sunday, the invitation is to let Christ's Body and Blood cleanse our body and blood. Let Jesus' wounds transform our wounds. And, as Church, let us pray over and over again, Jesus I trust in you.