

2nd Sunday of Easter Glorified Wounds

Bishop Frank Schuster

St. Martin of Tours saw what looked like the Risen Lord before him. The vision was beautiful, with a kingly vestment and a crown. However, St. Martin knew immediately that what he was seeing was not the Risen Lord at all, but a demon in disguise. When asked how he knew, St. Martin responded, “He had no wounds. The Risen Lord has wounds.” This remarkable insight sheds light on our Gospel this weekend. When Jesus appears before the eleven, 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 and save the world!

This is why, in our Gospel this weekend, Jesus says, “Peace be with you”. It feels like an incongruous greeting because the disciples had every reason to not to feel peace. They were fugitives. There were mobs looking for them, threatening to take their lives. When Jesus was arrested, they fled. Something happened to cause them to reunite for the sake of the Gospel. That something was the resurrection of the Lord. And when Jesus appears to them, despite everything that had happened, Jesus says, “Peace be with you”. And despite all the dangers, the disciples felt overwhelming joy.

Now many of us can relate with Thomas. He was not present with the other disciples the first time Jesus appeared to them. He therefore told them, “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.” We have all been there. Thomas was a wounded soul. Jesus’ medicine for Thomas was to show him his glorified wounds. Thomas falls on his knees and says, “My Lord and my God.” Jesus’ next words are haunting. They are directed towards us, “Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

How do we see Jesus? How does discipleship and evangelization begin? Jesus gave us a hint in today’s Gospel reading when he says, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me so I send you.” You see, the word “sent” shows up several times in the Gospel of John. Jesus says that he was sent by the Father, “not to do my will, but the will of the one who sent me.” When the man born blind regains his sight, he does so by going to the Pool of Siloam, which means “sent”. Jesus also promised to send the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, to strengthen his disciples and Church. The theology of sending in the Gospel of John has a two-fold meaning.

First, there is the relationship we have to the one sending us from the waters of baptism, giving us spiritual sight to be one with the sender. Second, there is the mission we have been given to the world around us that is at times hostile to the message being sent. (James Mc Polin, S.J. “John” pg. 133) And so,

how do we see Jesus? We see Jesus in each other by the measure our lives reflect being sent by Jesus by our baptism into the Body of Christ. Indeed, the word “Apostle” comes from the Greek word that literally means “sent”.

Before sending his disciples out as apostles, Jesus says, “Peace be with you.” How do we find peace in life? Like Saint Thomas, we find peace by touching Jesus’ glorified wounds. In that way, our wounds become touched by Jesus’ glorified wounds at the same time. Only through Jesus can our wounds be transformed into a source of strength that can then help others around us. The only way that can happen is if we trust our wounds to Jesus in the first place. What does that look like?

My friends, this weekend we also celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday. St. Faustina offered the Church a portrait of Jesus that gives us a remarkable display of what glorified wounds look like. Under the portrait of her vision of Jesus are the words, “Jesus I trust in you”. I may not know where my life is going, but Jesus, I trust in you. I may be wracked with infirmity, but Jesus I trust in you. The cross I am carrying at work or at home may feel unbearable, but Jesus I trust in you. My friends, only Jesus can offer us the gift of peace. That peace has the power to heal the world around us, one soul at a time.