

Pastor's Letter

April 14, 2024—3rd Sunday of Easter

Dear Church Family,

In our first reading from the book of Acts St. Peter is pretty generous towards the people who crucified Jesus. He doesn't say, "Jesus is back and boy, are you going to get it!" Instead he says, "Now I know, brothers, that you acted out of ignorance, just as your leaders did; but God has thus brought to fulfillment what he had announced beforehand through the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer. Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be wiped away." Instead of gloating he invites the crowd in the temple to turn and be part of the great thing that God has done in raising Jesus from the dead. He invites them to repent and experience the new life that is the fulfillment of everything that Israel has hoped for, reconciliation with God.

Paul is able to be generous to them because he knows that Jesus has been generous to him. When the disciples see Jesus in the closed room where they are hiding in our Gospel reading, they think that Jesus has come back to haunt them. They think he is a ghost come back for revenge for their having deserted him at the cross. but Jesus calms their fears by saying to them, "Peace be with you." And he shows them the nail marks in his hands and feet, the marks of his sacrifice of himself for the forgiveness of sins. Those wounds have been transformed from death-dealing injuries into life-giving emblems of the depth of God's mercy.

Then he does something that would have felt very familiar to them. He sits down to eat with them, just as he had so many times before. They remember all those other meals where Jesus taught them about life in the kingdom and God's plan to heal the world. And it all starts to make sense and they aren't afraid, but overcome with joy.

Christ show us his wounds today and invites us to claim the place at his side that they have won for us. Jesus holds his hands out to us to embrace us in his love and catch us when we fall. As St. John says in our second reading, "My children, I am writing this to you so that you may not commit sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one. He is expiation for our sins, and not for our sins only but for those of the whole world." John also challenges us to show our love by obeying his commandments with the promise of God's help and forgiveness when we stumble. May the wounds of Christ inspire us to never give up trying and may the mercy of God inspire us to generously reach out to everyone with the good news of salvation.

Blessings,

Fr. Scott