

Pastor's Letter

April 7, 2024—Sunday of Divine Mercy

Dear Church Family,

In our Gospel reading for today, Jesus appears to the disciples twice, once when Thomas is absent and once when he is present. Both times his greeting is the same, “Peace be with you.” When Thomas missed Jesus the first time, the testimony of the other disciples was not enough to convince him of the truth of the resurrection. It brought him no peace. He had to experience the presence of Jesus for himself. He had to hear Jesus speak peace to him personally.

In a way, all of us are like Thomas. We all learn about Jesus in Scripture and in the teachings of the church. We know the stories of the saints and we have met good and holy people whose lives have been shaped by faith. These things are important evidence of the truth of the gospel. They point us to Christ. They even help us come to faith. But they are not enough in and of themselves.

Each of us, like Thomas, want to have a personal encounter with Christ. We want to touch him and be touched by him. We don't just want to know about him. We want to know him. The problem is, Jesus is not accessible to our physical senses. We can't see him or touch him or hear him the same way his first disciples did when they traveled with him through Galilee and Judea. But that doesn't mean that we can't have a real experience of him. We just have to learn to see and touch and hear in a different way. A spiritual way.

The whole Christian life is designed to help us learn this spiritual way. The sacraments open our hearts and minds to receive him. Learning Scripture and Tradition helps us learn to recognize the voice of Christ when he speaks to our spirits. When we love and serve others we put ourselves in Jesus shoes, walking the same path that he walked. All these practices sharpen our spiritual senses and make our prayer a personal encounter with our living Lord.

After Thomas saw Jesus in his second appearance to all the disciples Thomas declared Jesus to be his Lord and his God. Jesus replied to him, “Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.” Jesus is saying here that those who have this kind of spiritual encounter with Christ are more blessed even than those who had a physical meeting with Jesus. It's the spiritual walk with Jesus that brings true joy and peace. Peace be with you.

Blessings,

Fr. Scott

“Peace”
BE WITH YOU!