

April 11, 2012 – Second Sunday after Easter
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Acts 5:12-16; Psalms 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24; Revelation 1:9-11, 12-13, 17-19; John 20:19-31

Jesus came to heal all those sick in body, mind and spirit and to call his followers to be healers. His mercy and compassion opened hearts and minds in ways that dispelled fear. Further, his appearance to the apostles after he was raised from the dead filled them with courage that helped them overcome their fear, discouragement and loss. It helped them gradually to trust – to believe that he could and would be with them in a new, though transformed way.

Today's readings are steeped in the healing message of Jesus, his mercy, his patient, compassionate love of us despite our resistance, our unbelief.

Thomas was not with the other disciples when Jesus first appeared in their locked upper room after he was raised from the dead. Thomas did not believe the others; he needed proof by seeing and feeling the wounds inflicted on Jesus. Jesus appeared once again through locked doors to visit with his close friends – disciples all, who were still full of fear because of their close association with Jesus, and uncertainty about their future. Thomas was with them this time and Jesus approached him gently, lovingly letting him feel the wounds of his hands and touch his pierced side. This proof of course convinced Thomas and relieved his doubt. Jesus did not scold him for his doubting but helped him to see and understand his new reality.

How often God is patient with us through our lack of faith and need for clarity. For us so often "seeing is believing" which means that we live in doubt, uncertainty and deep-seated fear much of our lives. The belief that the Resurrection evokes in us is that Jesus lives in the fullness of God's Spirit. Thomas and the other disciples were beginning to realize that the healing mystery of Jesus challenged them to be healers themselves; they were to heal their neighbors; to serve the least among them; to offer compassion to the most needy and ignored; to know that they are Jesus still hanging on the Cross. So often in our lives we are called to believe in things unseen, in promises not yet fulfilled, in healing that seems beyond belief, in possibilities not yet realized, or understood.

A few years ago the whole world community was actually absorbed in the heartbreaking damage of Haiti's earthquake. How could we possibly respond to such indescribable turmoil, devastation, loss and pain! For the living, for those buried alive, for relatives too far away to relieve the pain of their loved ones, how and what were they to believe! So much agony, so much life-changing injury, such unquenchable pain! Yet we were challenged to embrace an all-loving God suffering in the people of Haiti; calling us to be healers who could help those whose lives have been torn asunder to believe that they can heal and be healed. The world struggled to help them believe that in their losses they will eventually find their way to recover, to re-group, to heal and live again.

We ask ourselves where our faith would be in such circumstances, and continue to pray deeply for those who were caught in this enormous disruption of human life. One woman rescued after a week of burial under her building was murmuring prayers and singing a song. This pure and simple resilience of faith buried deep inside her amazes and challenges us. We pray to be like this woman, living each day with its large or small struggles; God's Spirit will help us find our way to heal and be healed.

May we become more and more an Easter people, believing in the small and large resurrections in our lives day by day. If seeing is believing, and not seeing yet believing is indeed the stuff of faith, may the inspiration of the resurrected Jesus lead us to an ever more profound belief in the healing power of love and compassion towards all people and in all people!

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