

## **April 12, 2015 – Second Sunday of Easter (Year B)**

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Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24; First John 5:1-6; John 20:19-31

*Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. – Acts 4: 32*

“Seeing is believing!” “Actions speak louder than words!” Wise popular sayings can remind us of important truths like the role of personal experience and action in living our faith. Sayings can also sometimes hide our excuses for complacency, self-righteousness, or a kind of “prove it” attitude. In the life of discipleship to which we are called there is no room for excuses.

The reading from the Acts of the Apostles jolts us out of complacency and calls us to give witness through our life choices to Jesus’ profound call to right relationships in communion. Early Christians considered that all is gift to be shared for the common good. Talent, power, and material resources are gifts to be laid at the feet of the mission to which we are called by the Spirit so that we might live as one, knowing that we – all life of the earth – are connected, related and inter-dependent. The welfare of one is based in that of the others, and the welfare of the others is based in that of the one.

Today’s Gospel speaks of the disciples hiding in fear until they recognize the presence of Jesus in their midst and discover the peace he offers. They are filled with joy in this new awareness. The Spirit hovers in the air around them and yet they do not leave their hiding place. When the disciples, through Thomas, get close enough to see and touch the wounds of Jesus, they are able to release their fear and receive Jesus’ gift of the Spirit. Only then are they free enough, bold enough to set forth in mission with minds open and hearts filled with the Spirit.

In the second reading, we are reminded that it is our baptism that calls us to participate in the mission of Jesus. We are called to new life lived in a new way. Authentic action flows from who we are as witnesses to an urgent message – the Easter message of transformation. Jesus has shown us the transforming way of compassion, forgiveness, and generosity in service to others. If we model our lives on that of Jesus, we are asked to reach out without fear, without prejudice, and in generosity in order to experience our connectedness to the other in our midst or across the globe.

As a child, I was taught to put family first and to beware of those perceived as “other” or “different.” Shaking off a bit of my fear, I entered Maryknoll and learned to embrace differences. I was sent in service to the people of Korea, Sudan, Nicaragua, and more recently to my elders here at the Maryknoll Sisters Center. As a nurse, I have always found the availability and quality of health care and nutritional needs important to me. These and other issues are not being addressed adequately in the world. Because of global inequalities of wealth distribution, the abuse of the Earth and its resources, and the use of violence to protect or enhance the life of some at the cost of many, valuable lives and resources are destroyed even as we face the basic issue of sustainability of life on Earth. Practical, compassionate, and just solutions based in right relationships are needed.

Right relationships are built not on the color of our skin, the genes of our species, the thickness of our bankroll, the affinity of friendship, nor on long-shared traditions of culture or faith; rather, they are built on the acceptance and celebration of kinship in the full diversity and full oneness of creation. Looking into the eyes of others, touching their lives, and placing our hands on the wounds of our sisters and brothers teaches us just how alike we are, how vulnerable, how in need of healing, and how deeply rooted in hope.

Hope is what Jesus breathes into us each day calling us to reach out, confirm our global kinship, and make daily efforts to live in the compassion and communion for which we are created.