

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter

April 19, 2020

The Gospel on Easter Sunday morning spoke about how the empty tomb did not and really could not contain the Risen Christ. In today's Gospel, we see that nothing can keep Christ out of anywhere He chooses to be. The limits of the physical world no longer restrain him. He has Risen. While the disciples, in fear, are not looking for Christ, Christ is looking for them. The Gospel says that His disciples rejoiced when they saw Him, and they did, eventually. But, locked into that room trying to keep danger out, they may not have been immediately consoled to see Christ standing there, with His wounds still plain to see. Had He entered that room to scold them? Had He come to judge them and tell them what they already knew, that they had failed Him terribly? They needed to hear the voice of the Good Shepard. And when He spoke, it's clear that He was not angry. He reassured them that He had not come for revenge but redemption. "Peace be with you," He said. Then he sent them to be ministers of God's forgiveness and mercy not only thru the sacrament of penance but also through daily acts of forgiveness by each Christian.

All of us get wounded in life. If we ever dared to show our emotional wounds and scars to the people who caused them, what would we say? It's likely that we would say: "See what you did to me. See what you let happen to me. I want you to hurt as much as you hurt me." It feels powerful to speak this way, but it's not the power of the Risen Christ's forgiveness. It is revenge. Forgiveness doesn't mean that the offense didn't hurt or that it didn't matter or that amends don't need to be made. Forgiveness is a powerful option given to us by Christ to break the cycle of revenge. In every conflict between individuals, families, or nations, there comes a time when more anger, hatred, hurt, or retaliation, simply will not make a permanent change to improve the situation. And we need to stop listening to people who say that it will. Instead, we need to listen to Christ.

The coronavirus is still testing all of us as we try to cope with the situation. Staying at home for four or five weeks, working from home, going to school from home, has probably increased some tensions, tried our patience, and maybe brought out a harsh word or two. All of this is to be expected. Today's liturgy encourages us more than ever to speak words of mercy, understanding, patience, and forgiveness to one another, especially in our homes. The liturgy also encourages us to minister to the wounds this pandemic is causing in all of us. The wounds of Christ restored Thomas's faith and strengthened him to touch the wounds of people with the healing power of the Risen Christ. The resurrection empowers us and challenges us to do likewise. So, to those we live with and those we work with, let us be ministers of Christ's divine mercy.

*Fr. Valentine*

**Today's Readings:**

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Acts 2:42-47

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 118:1

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: 1Pt 1:3-9

Gospel: Jn 20:19-31