

**Fr. John Sassani**  
**Homily Given on April 23, 2006**  
**Second Sunday of Easter**  
**Liturgical Year B**

During the summer of 1994, I was studying at Creighton University in Omaha, taking a course on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola. As we began the course, the professor told us to pray the Exercises, not just to study them. Prayer for me had been talking to God. The Exercises focused instead on simply sitting quietly with God...a lot!

So I prayed the Exercises that way, expecting very little to nothing at all. One day I was sitting in my room, praying with the story of the call of the disciples. In the quiet, I heard a voice as clear as a bell call: "John". It scared the hell out of me! But I knew it was authentic. I was not dreaming, not hallucinating, not making it up. I had the sense that it was Christ's voice, and I felt the tell-tale evidence of His presence.

My life change for me that day. After that, I prayed differently. I began to know Christ in a new, deeper, more personal way. The Risen Christ came into my world in a new way that day and changed it.

Christ does that. We hear about it today. He entered the closed world of the ten disciples on Easter. Judas was gone, Thomas was missing. He came again a week later and changed Thomas with the tell-tale evidence of His presence...His wounds, His voice...by that palpable response that had made Thomas a follower in the first place.

Christ does it for all of us: when you felt alone, not just without company but truly alone and suddenly you felt His presence...when you felt hopeless and then hope devoured hopelessness...when you wanted to pray and couldn't, then heard His voice, felt His grace...when you felt out of it at the Eucharist, in the middle of a community of believers and thought, "This works for them but not for me," and then at Holy Communion, or in the quiet after, you felt the tell-tale evidence of His presence. In these times, we can only say, "My Lord and my God".

Christ's presence changed the disciples from sad, dejected individuals in a room to a community to which Thomas is rejoined...to a community (in Luke's description in Acts) who are of one mind and heart, who bear witness to Christ, and among whom there are no needy people, because of the change the Risen Christ makes in them.

Our gathering for the Eucharist acknowledges His presence and at the same time schools us to be more alert to His presence, able to perceive the tell-tale evidence of His presence so that He can change us...so that, when people encounter us, they might experience the tell-tale evidence of His presence and be changed too.