

Resurrection Wounds

2nd Sunday of Easter (Year C)

April 28, 2019

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As a society that greatly values the medical profession, the overarching message we hear is don't get sick and if you do, we can do a lot to help you. Thank God for all of our medical advances and the ways that medicine has been able to protect us from pain and prolong our lives. But we must ask ourselves: Is the purpose of life to avoid illness? Is life about never getting hurt? Are we supposed to stay healthy at all costs?

The Jesus we encounter today is not the perfectly healthy one. He is risen, but he bears the wounds of his crucifixion still on his body. He is alive, but he is somewhat disfigured.

In the Gospel passage from *John*, the wounds of the Risen Lord are essential for the apostle Thomas to come to terms with what supposedly happened. Maybe there was an imposter out there? Maybe this was all a bad dream? So, he says to the other disciples, "unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." A week later, Jesus finds Thomas and says to him, "put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." At that, Thomas is convinced and believes. It was all because of the wounds.

So much of our time and energy is put into hiding our wounds from others out of the fear of being vulnerable or exposed. We don't want others to know our weaknesses. How different that is from the sick in our First Reading from the *Acts of the Apostles* who allowed themselves to be 'carried out into the streets and laid on cots and mats so that when Peter

came by, at least his shadow might fall on them.’ They didn’t care anymore about looking weak. They were alright with the judgmental stares of others. On top of all of this, they probably didn’t even have the money or resources to hide their wounds as the wealthy could. As the story ends, “they were all cured.”

Wounds, whether physical or emotional, are constant reminders of the pain we’ve been through. Again, while many people hide them out of fear, others become angry because of them. In anger, they blame everyone else and are bitter at the world for their pain. But to those who can gaze upon their wounds lovingly without fear or anger, they will be transformed people. They will know the price they have paid to come to a deeper understanding of suffering and the meaning of life. They will be believable signs of the risen Christ.

Resurrection isn’t about hiding our wounds, but allowing them to be signs of what we’ve been through.

What are my wounds?

Wounds are our credibility. They stick with us and testify to the truth of what we have been through. As the Risen Lord shows us today, the person who lives a full life is not the unwounded person, but the one who can expose their wounds and still say, ‘peace be with you.’