

## 19 April 2020

### Second Sunday of Easter

*Act 2:42-47; John 20:19-31*

Someone sent me this joke years ago and I uncovered it while uncluttering last week. So, as a new bride, Edna moved into the small home on her husband Jack's ranch. She put a shoe box on a shelf in her closet and asked him never to touch it. For fifty years Jack left the box alone, until Edna was old and dying. One day when he was putting their affairs in order, he remembered the box and thought it might hold something important. Opening it, he found two lace doilies, along with \$82,500. Jack took the box to Edna and asked her about the contents. "My mother gave me that box the day we were married," she said. "She told me to make a doily to help ease my frustrations every time I got mad at you." Forgetting about the money, Jack was touched that in all of fifty years, Edna had only been mad at him twice. But then he saw the money and asked, "But what's the \$82,500 for?" "Oh," she said, "that's the money I made selling the doilies."

Edna shows us a constructive way to deal with hard feelings without rupturing relationships. Bill learned, after perhaps some embarrassment, about the merciful love of his beloved, who loved him through thick and thin.

That merciful love is like the love of Jesus. Jesus predicted that his Apostles would abandon him on the day of his death. **He would have had every reason to come back at them angry. But that's not was Risen Life is like. Risen Life, seen in the Risen Jesus is all merciful. He wishes them "Peace."** What a relief they must have felt! The lesson for us: Never ever, ever, feel embarrassed coming to the Lord in prayer. He will always wish you peace. **Maybe you've been away from Church, maybe you've been inattentive to Jesus, maybe you've done some things in your life that make you ashamed. Jesus comes to you. Do not be afraid; he wishes you peace.**

So much of living in the light of Christ's Resurrection, living as a new creation, has to do with our relationships. With Jesus, of course, learning to trust his love and learning to invite his sometimes challenging voice that moves us along the way of salvation. But it's also our relationships with one another that are key to living risen life. We hear that obviously in the first reading that describes how the first Christians put aside selfishness and greed and shared everything in common. I also hear it in the Gospel account.

**It is really significant that "Thomas was not with them when the Lord appeared."** Because Thomas is my patron saint, I often project my own experiences onto him, and because I have sometimes felt at odds with a group, or excluded and left out, I feel a lot of tension in that simple sentence about Thomas not being with them. Maybe he didn't get his way on a group decision, or felt unheard, unvalued, and so he took off and sulked. Whatever the case, **he would have seen the Lord if he were with them.**

**I remember one evening as a young adult.** I think it was a Friday because I was looking forward to doing something fun with a group of friends. And honestly I don't remember how it all transpired, but I know I soured on the group, felt hurt, and went home, alone. What I do most vividly remember is that while I was lying on my bed, trying to read but distracted by my sulking. One of my friends approached, though the doors were locked, by yelling up to my bedroom window. Leaving no room for my embarrassment at my immaturity, the friend just said, "I hope you're OK, come one down and let's join the party." It was a beautiful gift to me; it was healing.

**We might consider in prayer this week people who have come through your locked doors, sought you out and healed you. If you can think of one, that person was Christ to you. Also, you might consider in prayer someone whom you could seek out and include. You have the opportunity to be Christ to that person.**

So often, we make the idea of coming to faith about a mental decision to believe. We focus on Thomas needing proof. He also needed to be with his brothers. A large part of faith is about belonging, being together so that we can see the Lord.

I thirst, as do most of you, I'm sure, for the day we're all together in this space again. I suppose you could read the Gospel account today as the Lord coming to us in Eucharist but you missed him because you're not here within these walls. I hope we know better. **I hope we know that whenever two or more are gathered in his name, he is present among us.** Let us allow ourselves to both seek and be found, by the Lord Jesus and by one another.