

*As the Easter season continues*, I am so aware of the hunger that each of us feels to be able to gather together once again for Eucharist—we know that this is not anything anyone living has truly ever experienced. However, I think about the disciples as they gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem, awaiting the consolation that Jesus had promised them. They too, were in a set of circumstances that no one else had ever experienced either. Yet, Jesus appeared in their midst over and over again, offering them first of all, His peace. When things seem so different and our means of communication seem limited, I remind myself of all that modern technology offers—and more importantly, what it cannot offer. We can share data, we can have a visual conversation via Zoom or other social media platforms, we can share jokes and things we find humorous with one another, yet we still find these means of communication limiting. They are ultimately unsatisfying, because even the immediacy of sharing words does not substitute for the presence of each other. If nothing else, perhaps we can learn how important that presence of others truly is for our happiness and well-being. When I was still studying theology during my final years in seminary, it was pastorally spoken of as a “theology of presence.” It has been one of the great experiences of priesthood for me to be present to the people of God at particularly challenging moments in their lives—sometimes the painful and trying times, but also during the joyful and beautiful times of life. Jesus continues to remind us that when every one else has disappeared and we find ourselves alone, that He is still present, and His peace is still offered to us all until that time we can celebrate with one another. Until then, we continue to pray, to keep each other safe and to know that these times of sacrifice in isolation are preparing us for something joyful! Easter peace and blessings to all!