

BREAKING OPEN THE WORD



April 27, 2014

Second Sunday of Easter

Sunday of Divine Mercy

Lectionary: 43

Gospel Jn 20:19-31

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "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." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed." Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

Spiritual Reflections

Once there was a good king who ruled wisely and who ruled well. He was loved by all the people of his kingdom. One day the king called his four daughters together and told them that he was leaving on a long journey. "I wish to learn more about God. I am going to a far off monastery to spend a long time in prayer. In my absence I am leaving the four of you in charge of my kingdom." "Oh, Father," they cried, "don't leave us. We will never be able to rule the kingdom without you." The king smiled. "You'll do well in my absence," he said. "Now before I leave, I wish to give each of you a gift. It is my prayer that this gift will help you learn how to rule." The king placed a single grain of rice in each daughter's hand. Then he left on his journey. The oldest daughter immediately went to her room. She tied a long golden thread around the grain of rice and placed it in a beautiful crystal box. Every day she picked up the box and looked at it. The second daughter also went to her room, where she placed the grain of rice in a wooden box and put it in a secure spot—under her bed. The third daughter, a very pragmatic young woman, looked at the grain and thought, "This grain of rice is no different from any other grain of rice." She simply threw the grain of rice away. The youngest daughter took her grain of rice to her room and wondered about the significance of the gift. She wondered for a week, then a month. When nearly a year passed, she understood the meaning of the gift. Months turned into years, and the four daughters ruled their father's kingdom. And then one day, the king returned. His beard was full and his eyes sparkled with illumination gained through years of prayer. The king greeted each of his daughters, then asked to see the gifts he had left with them. The oldest daughter rushed to her room and brought back the crystal box. "Father," she began, "I carefully tied a golden thread around the grain of rice and have kept it near my bed where I have looked at it every day since you left." Bowing to his daughter, the king accepted the box and said "Thank you." Next, the second

daughter presented her father with a wooden box containing the grain of rice. "All these years I've kept the rice secure under my bed," she said. "Here it is." Again the father bowed to his daughter accepted the box and said "Thank you." The third daughter rushed into the kitchen, found a grain of rice, ran back and said, "Father, here is my grain of rice." Smiling, the king accepted the grain of rice, bowed, and said, "Thank you." Finally the youngest daughter stepped before her father and said, "I do not have the grain of rice that you gave me," she said. "Well, what have you done with it?" the king inquired. "Father, I thought about the grain of rice for nearly a year before I discovered the meaning of the gift. I realized that the grain of rice was a seed. So I planted it in the ground. Soon it grew, and from it I harvested other seeds. I then planted all those seeds, and again I harvested the crop. Father I have continued to do this. Come outside and look at the results." The king followed his daughter where he looked out an enormous crop of rice stretching as far as the eye could see. There was enough rice to feed the entire nation. Stepping before his daughter, the king took off his golden crown and placed it on her head. "You have learned the meaning of how to rule," he said softly. From that day on, the youngest daughter ruled the kingdom. She ruled long, wisely, and well. What we as a Church celebrate now is the growth of the faith. Maybe the problem with the world is that people do not have faith but rather they do not know what to do with that faith. The apostles realized that what they had experienced was not for them alone. They went out spreading the Gospel and for most they did this by example.

Spiritual Questions

1. What would you do if you were one of the first apostles?
2. What does the fact that Jesus placed his burial cloth's in neat piles mean to you?
3. What is going on between Peter and John?
4. Why did Jesus chose a woman to bring the Good News to the Disciples?
5. What was everyone else doing this Sunday morning?