

Second Sunday of Easter – Year C (April 10, 2010)

(Acts 5:12-16; Jn 20:19-31)

Fear, anxiety, disappointment; the world of the Apostles had quickly fallen apart. The messiah that they had followed, observed and loved had just died a very painful and human death. The death of a common criminal – He had done nothing wrong yet they killed Him. What could they do; what should they do? How could His apostles gather the strength to carry on His work? They had listened when he had said the Son of God would have to die on a cross, but they did not really believe that it would end this way!

They all, not just Thomas, had doubts about their future, but they had seen their Lord and believed. They were **renewed** and **reinvigorated** by His greeting! Now for Thomas, he was the practical sort. He had to “see it to believe it”.

Are we so different?

I don't think that any of us have seen the face of Christ. None of us have touched His wounds or probed His side!

If someone said to us “Why do you believe in Christ and then said: PROVE IT- what would we do?

We could quote scriptures, chapter & verse from the Bible – we could recount the stories of His passion and Easter resurrection still so fresh in our minds.

We might even tell of times in our lives that Jesus was very real and present with us! I could tell about when my mother died and how as I was leaving the hospital and her for the last time, filled with sadness and doubt about her journey to God, but when I got to my car and drove away, I felt such unexplainable joy in my heart that I started to sing: How Great Thou Art – one of her **and** my most favorite hymns - not a very normal reaction, would you think? Yet, I felt His presence as if He were saying: PEACE, BE WITH YOU! Your mother is o.k. – she is with me!

No doubt that if we were questioned about our faith, we would defend it with a passion that would convey our belief. But what “PROOF” do we have; or is there room for doubt? In our lives, we all face “trials & tribulations”, ups & downs, good times and sad. Highlights and yes, lowlights, too. In the economic climate that we live in, many of us are struggling to keep our jobs, or have already joined the ranks of the unemployed. We have learned new words – downsized, outsourced, downturn, rising food and medical cost, the list goes on and on!

We have become a society of skeptics filled with pessimism. We build walls around ourselves, we think, to protect ourselves from the evil and hurt of the rest of the world – much like the Apostles did when they gathered in that upper room behind locked doors.

They gathered in that room filled with their own doubts about what the future held for them and just maybe some of us are gathered here today wondering the same thing! We, like the Apostles, seek relief from our doubts; We, like the Apostles, want to know how we are to go on in the face of the new reality of this present time with all of its challenges.

Perhaps, we can again turn to the gospel. What were the first words that our risen Lord spoke to the Apostles? **PEACE, BE WITH YOU!** Not once, not twice, but three times we hear Him!

A greeting, yes, perhaps, but could it also be a gentle **command** to calm them and reassure them that **He**, *the wounded, crucified and risen Lord* is still with them?

Perhaps our PROOF of Christ' existence today, does not come just from the word we read in sacred scripture or the stories we share about Him. Sure, they are all important parts of our lives, but the real proof of His existence lies in our heart.

Consider the times that He says to us: **PEACE, BE WITH YOU!**

Before we come to the table of the Lord in the Eucharist, we are invited to hear: Peace, be with you! Do you feel it?

When we offer ourselves for the sacrament of penance, we are invited to hear: Peace, be with you! After a good confession, do you feel it?

In the time of quiet meditation after receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, we are invited to hear: Peace, be with you! Do you feel His peace within you?

I for one, relish that feeling of His peace, His presence. It washes away the fears, the anxiety and the harshness of this world and makes me long for the glory of Heaven!

As we continue with our celebration of the resurrection with the sacrifice of this mass, when we have the opportunity to turn to our neighbor and offer the sign of peace, take a few extra seconds to think about how the Apostles might have reacted, how they might have felt to have Jesus standing next to them in that room and remember that we have Jesus standing next to us, too. Cherish that feeling, because that is all the PROOF that we need to know that the crucified, risen Lord exists and is always with us!

Blessed are those who have NOT seen and BELIEVE....