

**Second Sunday of Easter – 2020     Deacon Thomas Daw**

May the Lord be with all of you!

It seems forever since I have seen all of you. My wife, Margee, has been diligent about both of us remaining quarantined for the thirty-five days partly due to my highly compromised immune system. So it is good that I can spend these few minutes sharing God's word with you.

We often refer to the scriptures as the "living Word of God". I suggest that in the peak of the COVID 19 pandemic, the Gospel setting is descriptive of how many of us may feel today and are living today.

The Gospel today conveys the story of the disciples still gathered in the upper room after Jesus had been arrested, crucified, buried. The disciples have locked themselves in that room fearful for their very lives. The scriptures tell us they feared that guilt by association with Jesus would be sufficient reason for them to experience the very same death on a cross.

Over the past weeks, I think all of us have come to know what living behind locked doors feels like; locked behind doors of fear and stress that I or a loved one could be the next one to catch the virus.

However, not all of us are locked behind physical doors or in a physical room, some of us are locked in rooms behind emotional doors. For instance, I recall there are those who are forced to be at their jobs because they are part of the fight: all healthcare workers; people who supply the necessities of food, heat, water, electricity and those who protect us our police, fire-fighters, and military. All of these and other's like them who are compelled to stay on their job may find themselves paralyzed in fear over "Who's next?", and "When or if, I return home, will I impose the virus on a loved one?"

I also think about those who are paralyzed by depression, especially due to: loss of life of a loved one, loss of a job, or just lost from no longer performing everyday functions that for so many years have defined them.

Those depressed by the longing in their heart to once again be with spouses, children, grandchildren, parents, siblings, and close friends, and the longing we all share to once again be together, under the roof of our church, to join in the celebration of the Mass and receive Holy Communion.

The message of this Gospel **needs to find all of us** because all of us are, in some way, like the disciples in our Gospel; locked behind physical or emotional doors; paralyzed and frozen in stress or fear; and not knowing the next step, or not having the courage to take it.

This is Easter time, a season of **resurrection**, and the time for us to be reminded of the joyous message we receive in today's gospel which is this:

Let's begin by recalling Jesus words of greeting "Peace be with you", words so powerful and important that only seconds later Jesus repeats, them "Peace be with you!"

By this greeting the disciples are reassured that Jesus' peace, mercy, and grace is freely given and awaits only **their recognition** and now **our recognition** of his presence in our midst no matter how frozen in stress fear we have become, and no matter the doors and walls that hide us.

Now recall Saint Thomas' reply "My Lord and my God!" His reply shows his courage in his faith affirms that Jesus is Risen, Jesus is his Lord and that Jesus is the Son of God.

Thomas' proclamation of faith is also his recognition of the healing presence of our Jesus, and is Thomas' invitation to have the Lord to minister to him and the other disciples.

Thomas is the first to say these words, the first one to proclaim such about Jesus the risen Lord; However, Thomas cannot be the last.

In the center of our paralyzing fear, in our homes that have become offices and in our kitchens that have become classrooms, and at our jobs where we may risk our own life to save others, it is in those "rooms" that we need most to consciously invite Jesus to come and minister to us and those gathered with us.

With that invitation Jesus' warmth will melt the artificial boundaries, that have frozen us in stress and fear. And in the quiet of our prayer to our Lord, we will hear the compassion of his heart.

We will soon realize the fear and the stress that has confined us will no longer define us.

SO I invite you to continue celebrating resurrection. take a moment periodically every day to use the affirming, faith filled, proclamation of St. Thomas, "My Lord and MY God!"

Repeat the words "My Lord and my God" and in the silence that follows may you hear and feel the presence of Jesus in your life.

May His resurrection bring you **new** life with every prayer you pray.