

2nd Sunday of Easter

The gospel tells us that after the resurrection the apostles were “behind closed doors.” What were they afraid of? Probably several things. They were afraid that those responsible for the death of Jesus might hunt them down to get rid of the whole movement once and for all. They were afraid of public ridicule that they had, as it were “backed the wrong horse.” Jesus really wasn’t the one. They were afraid to go home. They had left everything to follow Jesus. Better to hide out until it all blew over.

Fear is a terrible thing. We all have our personal fears. We fear the growing threat of terrorism, Iran’s potential for nuclear weaponry, the seduction of our children, human trafficking. We fear increasing taxes, identity theft, unsafe streets, loss of health and income, aging, dying, and we fear matters of the heart.

There was a girl named Virginia who was 19 and pregnant, the victim of neglect and abuse, now with her 15th set of foster parents. The new foster mother asked her if she was frightened. She responded, “Kind of.” The mother said, “Let’s hope this turns out for the best.” Virginia simply said, “It hurts too much to hope.” - It hurts too much to hope. What a terrible burden to carry! There is a young woman locked in fear.

When we fear we tend to withdraw, take no risks, and hide behind the closed doors of our own making, pretending to be cool, sophisticated, the life of the party, or being aloof, a deep thinker. It’s all a façade. We’re afraid.

Fear. We are looking for someone to walk through the doors we’ve closed and call us out of our fears, someone who understands us because they’ve been there.

There’s a story told about a man whose face got severely burned trying to save his parents from a fire. His parents had perished and he became a recluse, refusing to let anyone, even his wife, see him. He wore a veil over his head. The wife went to a well known doctor who did face surgery, to see if he could help

him. The doctor asked her why she had come since the husband had refused any help. She said, "Doctor, I want you to disfigure my face so I can be like him. If I can share in his pain then maybe he will let me back into his life." The doctor was shocked and told the woman he could never do anything like that but that he would come to her house and try to talk to her husband. Knocking on the man's door the doctor told him who he was and that he could restore his face. No response. Then the doctor told the man of his wife's proposal, to disfigure her face and make it just like his in the hope he will let her back into his life. "That's how much she loves you." After a moment of silence the door opened.

The disciples, like the husband, were hiding behind locked doors, disfigured by their own betrayals and cowardice. Jesus appears in their midst – and you must notice this – he appears with his wounds. Maybe if Jesus appears to them disfigured, they will let him back into their lives.

When it hurts too much to hope, when life has wounded us, know that the risen Jesus with disfiguring wounds is waiting to get into our disfigured and fearful lives and call us out of our fears. Jesus got his wounds on Good Friday, so that being like us, we might let him in on Easter Sunday. He is willing to come through the doors we've used to shut him out and is standing outside with those terrible wounds searching out our terrible wounds, letting us know he understands where we're coming from, and that he can give us peace and wholeness. In this Easter season may we give our wounds to the Lord.