

## Reflections for 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter

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Faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is much more than simply believing in an amazing fact. Each of this Sunday's readings reminds us that belief in Jesus' resurrection is accepting and participating in a relationship that can enliven every part of our lives—now and forever.

When I was a college professor and chaplain, I would often have students talk about the difficulty of long-distance relationships (when one would be on our campus and the other at a campus far away). This was true despite all the various means of communication they had at their disposal, e.g., social media, snap chat, facetime, etc. They missed the personal presence of the other. In some ways that seems like what is happening in our faith family during this present time. Today's scriptures give us ways which we can live out our faith in whatever situation we may find ourselves.

John speaks of Jesus appearing simply to “the disciples,” unnumbered and unnamed, to help us later readers include ourselves in the picture. To enable those disciples to be sent as Jesus was sent, Jesus breathes on them and says, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” So, we too, no matter when and where we live, can have the same appearance of the risen Lord and that same Spirit in our lives. Perhaps we might feel left out like Thomas, yet Jesus seeks us out and give us his peace. But we have to make ourselves present to him.

This encounter with the risen Lord changed lives as we read in the Acts of the Apostles. The apostles were able to “perform signs and wonders” like Jesus. They did this in the “name” of Jesus. Jesus disciples devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles, to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and prayer. We recognize here the ingredients of Church life. They share a life in common, sharing with they had with those in need so that no one would lack what they needed. They dedicated themselves to prayer and breaking of bread – as Jesus asked them to do in memory of him.

These last few weeks and for some time into the future our common life has been disrupted. However, St. Peter's epistle (our second reading) might give us guidance. He says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” That hope is what encourages us to continue on now and during times of trial, confusion and doubt. Hope does not leave us disappointed as St Paul says (Rms 5:5). Peter says, “In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

How fitting it is that we hear those words now. My hope is that you take these words to heart as we muddle through these confusing times. They can also serve us well in the “normal” times when we are confronted with the ups and downs of life.

My prayer is that you hang on to that hope that we have in the risen Lord and that, even at a distance, you are able to witness the risen Lord in what you say and do.

