

## 04/07/13 ..... 2 Easter A

-- What do we often do when we are afraid to deal with someone? We hide from them. We find a place where we know we won't confront them and have to face them.

-- This has been true since the beginning of the human race. What did Adam and Eve do after they disobeyed God? They hid from him...or at least they tried to hide from him.

-- They were ashamed of themselves. And they were probably a bit fearful. Don't we remember, as children, hiding from our parents when we had done something they didn't want us to do?

-- Jesus' disciples were in hiding after his death. They were afraid of the men who'd caused Jesus' crucifixion, but they also knew they had run away from Jesus after his arrest.

-- A couple of them had seen the empty tomb. They knew they had not taken his body. They'd heard the women tell them Jesus was alive. I'd suspect that, even if that turned out to be true, they weren't quite sure they would want to see Jesus. What would he say to them?

-- Well, Jesus did appear to them. But did he ball them out? Did he say, *Where were you when I needed you?* No, he gave him his peace. He forgave them, and he gave them the power to forgive others.

-- Of course, they were joyful that they'd seen the Lord. But did they go out and tell everyone? No. A week later, when one of their absent brothers finally joined them, they were still locked in their room. They were still afraid.

-- Once again, we've experienced Easter. We have celebrated the great feast, especially with our brothers and sisters who have come into the Church this year. But that has not solved all our problems. We still face most of the same issues we faced before.

-- Jesus understands that. He knows we don't change overnight. He knows growth in faith is a lifetime process. So he gives us the gift of peace and his forgiveness for the many times we've goofed up.

-- For a number of years, we've celebrated the Sunday after Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday. And we are sure grateful for divine mercy. Without it, we'd be in deep trouble.

-- Those first followers of Jesus needed some time to absorb the reality of his resurrection and the hope it gave to them. Not just Thomas, but all of them, needed reassurance that God would still be with them.

-- Soon, though, they themselves would be instruments of God's healing. They would go out to the public squares to preach the Risen Jesus. In his name they would work many signs.

-- Of course, the power of the Holy Spirit had a lot to do with this. But they also needed time to gain the courage to do God's work. And they would continue to need the gift of the Spirit to face the challenges that would come their way in the future.

-- And so do we. This weekend, we pray in a special way for our young people who received the gift of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation from the bishop. They will face many challenges in living Christian lives, and they need that grace and our support as well.

-- We pray for all the members of our parish and the Church as a whole. We continue to need the power of the Holy Spirit to do God's work. Our parish has harnessed some of that power through our recent study on the Creed and the Sacraments. We need to maintain that momentum.

-- In the end, though, God works in us. God gives us his peace and mercy, despite our broken condition. May we see the signs of God's presence. We, too, can be instruments of God's peace.