

Gospel Reflection ~ April 8, 2018

The reading from John's Gospel has two appearances of the risen Jesus. In both scenes, Jesus appears on the first day of the week when his disciples are gathered behind locked doors. In both scenes Jesus greets his followers with "Peace be with you," assuring his fearful disciples that he has been victorious over death, and that he has fulfilled the promises he gave to them at their last meal together. He had said then that peace was his farewell gift to them, and that he would come back to them (14:27-28). He also promised that the Spirit of truth, the Advocate, would come to them (16:7-11). Now, breathing on them, he imparts the promised Spirit, and empowers them to forgive sins. He bestows these gifts of peace and the Holy Spirit on the disciples who had abandoned him during the Passion, thereby revealing his forgiveness and reconciliation with them. Just as Jesus had been sent by the Father, so now he sends his disciples. No longer behind locked doors, they are to continue Jesus' mission of forgiveness.

Between the two appearances of the risen Jesus, Thomas, absent from the first scene, does not believe the disciples, who say, "We have seen the Lord." Jesus' next appearance centers on his encounter with Thomas, whose cry of "My Lord and my God" expresses his own faith as well as that of the believing community. Thomas was able to make his profession of faith when he had seen and touched the risen Lord. The account, however, is not only about Thomas, but also about those who have not seen, whether in the first generation or in the millennia since then. Jesus announces a beatitude for them: "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed." The final verse of today's Gospel reading attests that the account was written "that you may come to believe... [and] may have life in his name.

Source: Workbook for Lectors, Gospel Readers, and Proclaimers of the Word.

Thank You

A very big thank you to all those who helped make Holy Week a beautiful celebration. Beginning with the Living Stations of the Cross at our final soup supper, where parishioners shared their hearts and love. There was laughter and tears as we shared in this experience. Next was Holy Thursday and the washing of the feet. If you have never had your feet washed, it truly is humbling and moving. Good Friday and the Veneration of the Cross stirs up emotions and is such a beautiful experience. Easter Vigil was a wonderful celebration! There was a baptism, confirmations and First Communion. We welcomed our newest Catholic brothers and sister into our community in true St. Francis style. The reception following was a wonderful time of food and fellowship! Easter Sunday was a true celebration of our Risen Lord. This week would not have happened without the help of so many. Thank you to all those who took time to help prepare, plan, decorate, sing, pray, read, serve, greet and attend. What an amazingly Blessed Week!

Bishop's Annual Appeal

"Sharing His Love, Encouraging Hope", the theme of the 2018 Bishop's Annual Appeal inspires us, as people of Faith, to share the love that God has for us, which can often bring hope to those who might not have felt His love. Works of kindness and help, in sometimes the smallest way, can bring about a profound change in a person's life. Through the BAA, we have an opportunity to bring about a positive change in the lives of many of God's people. Through your generosity, you are supporting the various ministries and programs that are so vital in spreading His love.

Living Our Faith - An 8 Part Series

As our society grows more and more complex, our ability to juggle it all deteriorates. We make choices as to which activity, passion, or pursuit we'll entertain with our attention. And in the midst of this, we often push our faith to the margins of our life—to become something we do on the side, when we're not focusing on our career or taking care of our family.

The danger of today is that in this excess of choice, we'll choose everything and let the things that matter drown in our flooded schedules.

This is what has happened to many of us. We've let our faith become a Sunday thing, not a 24/7 thing. Of course, I speak this from experience. There were times when I was overwhelmed with zeal and passion for ministry, and then other times when I struggled to do my devotionals. I still struggle with living faith out every day, especially amidst my heavy entrepreneurial schedule. But in bearing the dissatisfaction of a complacent faith, I forced myself to adopt new habits—habits that would allow me to bring my faith to the center of things again.

They are habits I learned from watching others and following their example. Now I've put a vocabulary to what they did differently. Consider these few habits, and learn from their example as well:

2. They don't see service to others as a special, designated time.

Bob Goff, the author of *Love Does*, never saw love as something to schedule. He was always acting on his love in whimsical, daily ways. But today, we often designate this kind of service as something special or unique. In our small groups, we set aside time where we work in the soup kitchen. We designate blocked off times to do an act of love. And then we return to not practicing it daily.

We can't make this distinction with service any longer. Christians are meant to exude this serving love every day, and the more we entertain this perspective of service being something special we do, the more we divorce it from our daily lives.

Love should not be something we schedule. Love should be a reflex.

Stay tuned for habits 3-8...

Source: <http://jesushacks.com/live-out-faith/>

Next Week's Readings

Acts of the Apostles 3:13-15, 17-19
1 John 2:1-5a
Luke 24:35-48



Capital Campaign

At the end of January we had commitment Sunday, when we asked parishioners to make their pledges for our Capital Campaign – Honoring the Past, Serving the Present, Preserving God's Gift for the Future. The response was phenomenal and this truly is a community planning for our future! Our goal is \$292,000 and to date we have \$190,919 paid. Thank you to those who have responded so generously. If you have not yet made your pledge, please consider doing so, so that you, too, can take ownership of this project. Statements have been mailed to those who have requested them. If you were expecting a statement and did not receive one, please contact the parish office.