

## 2024 Easter 3B

In today's Gospel reading, we are taken back to that first day of Resurrection. They are gathered in the upper room—though if we're honest, we should say they are hiding there. The Good News of the Resurrection had not yet pierced through their grief and fear and disappointment.

Th two disciples who had left for Emmaus earlier in the day have returned, and they tell an incredible, unbelievable story of encountering a man on the way who offered them a different perspective on the events of the past few days. A man who turned out to be Jesus. They only recognized him as their Risen Lord when he blessed and broke bread with them. And as soon as they knew it was him, he disappeared.

The disciples are confused, doubtful, disbelieving.

And suddenly Jesus is there. No one saw him come in, no one heard a key in the lock or the door open and close. He's just...there.

We can try all we want to rationalize it away by saying, "Oh, they were gathered together and as they shared their stories, it *was like* he was there in person..." but that's not what the story says.

It says he's there. In person, with hands and feet they can see and touch. With a belly that can be fed. He's not a ghost, not just spirit.

And he carries the marks of the wounds in his hands and feet.

That seems a little unfair, to me. It seems like he should have been restored to a state of perfection. If his Resurrection is the sign that God makes all things new, surely his skin would be made clean and smooth and unblemished, right? Surely, he shouldn't have to carry those wounds through all eternity? Even if they were just scars and no longer painful...they were a reminder of the horrible things he endured.

Why can't they just be erased?

Because that's not how Resurrection works.

Resurrection doesn't erase the past. It doesn't negate it.

It redeems it.

It redefines what it means to be whole. Whole isn't perfect. Whole isn't unscarred.

Whole is healed.

They know him by the wounds which were still there but unable to hurt him any more. They know him by the scars.

Think about that. Think about the promise inherent in that one detail. This thing that was done to him that was meant to negate him has only served as evidence to a deeper truth: If the power of God's Holy Spirit can bring life into that broken body, it can surely do wonders in and through us.

On Wednesday someone (Kim Peralta) said something so deeply profound that I can't believe I had never heard it before.

We were talking about how the disciples knew Jesus by his wounded but healed hands and feet. She reached back to the blessing I have used occasionally, the one from Teresa of Avila, which begins: *Christ has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours...*

She connected this idea that we are Christ's hands and feet in this world...and that those hands and feet don't hide the damage done to them by this world. Those hands are not perfect. The scars are part of the story.

We are the hands and feet of Christ, whose healed wounds *tell the story*. The story of Resurrection, of new life, of new wholeness.

A story is made more powerful, more accessible, by those scars. Sometimes, it is those very scars that tell a wounded soul, “I’m safe to talk to” or “there is hope.”

The wounded hands reach people that perfect, unblemished hands never could.

In the epistle reading, the author drives home the point: We don’t have to wait to get our act together. We don’t have to wait until the scars have faded. We don’t have to wait until the sweet bye-and-bye.

We are God’s beloved children *NOW*.

We are Christ’s hands and feet *NOW*.

The story is real *now*. We just have to be brave enough to let the light of Christ shine on and in and through our scars, so that those who are stumbling, broken and bleeding in the darkness, will see them and know—the story doesn’t have to end here.

Christ is waiting to appear in those locked away rooms where we hide. Christ is waiting to speak to our fearful, doubtful hearts a word of peace.

Amen.

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Christ has no body but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which  
he looks compassion on this world,  
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,  
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.  
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,  
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.