Dear Parishioners,

Peace be with you—I just lost my job. Peace be with you—I worry about my daughter who is upset that she can’t see or hug her grandparents. Peace be with you—my spouse and I do not even talk; we lead parallel lives. Peace be with you—I’m working in a department that doesn’t have enough supplies to keep me, the staff, or patients safe. Peace be with you—I’m not feeling well and I’m beginning to worry. Peace be with you—it has been over 4 weeks and there is still no Mass so I can receive holy communion.

Three times in the Gospel for this 2nd Sunday of Easter (April 19), Jesus addresses his disciples with the greeting, “Peace be with you”. It is an expression assuring life, healing, and joy. Gifts we all desire. But as these worries from the pandemic press upon us, it is understandable why we might ask: Can we believe in Jesus’ greeting? Is there reason to hope in the promise of peace?

What has always caught my attention is this. Notice, immediately after Jesus greets his disciples, he follows up with action. He shows them his hands and his side. Words of peace are greeted with action of showing his scars. Jesus unites peace with woundedness. Why does he do this?

Jesus is teaching us that woundedness is not to be hidden but rather to be shared. It is only in sharing our woundedness that leads to compassion which, in turn, leads to true peace. Please do not misunderstand me, by no means am I suggesting that we should go around dumping all our troubles on the first person we meet. But what Jesus is inviting us to learn is that in our relationships and friendships, we can sometimes serve others not only with our strengths but also our weaknesses.

Too often when someone we care about is worried, fearful, or in pain, our immediate response is to fix it and to take it away. But is so many circumstances, that option and power is not possible. In fact, there are some things in life we just can’t take away what threatens the one whom we love. But what we can do is to display our weakness. We can let the person we love know that we too have fears and worries. We can say, “You are not alone. I understand. I will be with you.”

This is why Jesus’ first actions to his disciples is to bear the scars of his Passion. He shows his woundedness to bring St. Thomas to faith and to bring the disciples to joy. Jesus gives us an example to follow because in sharing our woundedness, it opens up the door for a united peace.

We are all in this together. We all have similar fears, anxieties, and worries. We also know the kindness, the courage, and heroism of many who go above and beyond to serve and sacrifice for others. Whether it is participating in a parade so a child can have a celebration of a birthday of seeing family, friends, classmates, and neighbors. Whether it is a landlord providing rent relief by forgiving it or adding it to the back end. Whether it is a coworker voluntarily giving hours to a fellow employee who has a family with little children.

So, on this Divine Mercy Sunday…Peace be with you! I miss you all and you are in my prayers.

Fr. Michael
19 April 2020