

2nd Sunday of Easter (Cycle A) Homily
Mass Suspended due to Coronavirus
On-Line Homily

St. William, Champion | April 19, 2020

Acts 2:42-47 | 1 Pt 1:3-9 | Jn 20:19-31

Deacon Bob Mintus

Of all the questions we ask ourselves, I think the one most commonly asked is “How did we get here?” It can be useful to know where we’ve been, because it often helps us to find those answers.

This weekend, our readings give us some insight into the beginnings of the early Church. For many of us, John’s Gospel presents us with images that we can relate to as we come to the end of our first month of staying at home. The disciples are gathered together in the upper room, hiding for fear of the Jews. By now, they’ve heard all about the empty tomb, but maybe it just seems crazy and too good to be true. But as they wait, not knowing what to make of the events of Easter, Jesus appears to them and assures them that their hopes are not in vain. He is alive!

But how do they know it’s Jesus? John tells us that he showed them his hands and his side, and it was then that they recognized him and rejoiced.

In our society, we have an expression: “Seeing is believing.” Like St. Thomas in our Gospel today, we want to see it for ourselves before we are willing to believe it.

Most of us are visual learners. Psychologists tell us that the majority of what we learn, around 83%, comes from our sense of vision. In fact, we’re so “wired in” to what we see that we can be tricked by clever optical illusions and faked pictures. I remember a picture that people emailed years ago during the presidential race that showed Jane Fonda and John Kerry together at a protest rally. The picture was a carefully made fake. Yet because people saw it, they believed it to be true. Recent studies have been

done that suggest that, if we visualize something, even if we know it is not correct, we tend to give it credibility.

As powerful as our eyes are, we also have to remember that what we see gets filtered by our minds. We add our own biases, beliefs, and opinions that color what the truth is. Sometimes we even shut our eyes when we don't want to see things.

The early Church was made up of people much like us – they were people who struggled with their faith, even though they could see Jesus for themselves. Over their time together, the disciples grew in faith – enough that they would eventually be able to share that faith with others. They became visible signs of Christ present in their world.

Today, Jesus calls us to faith in him. And just like the disciples, he calls us to be a visible sign of his presence in our world today... Admittedly, many of us aren't getting "seen" a whole lot these days, so we have to find other ways in which we can be "visible" to each other, whether it's through social media, or our parish app, or even through a note or a phone call. Maybe it's just a simple smile or a wave from a safe distance that lets our neighbor know that we care about them. Even though we may be separated, we are still family. And as a family, we can turn to our parish prayer, which unites us as we pray it together:

Loving God,
Through the waters of baptism
You have called us by name,
and invited us to share
in the ministry of Jesus.
In our human weakness,
help us to respond in prayer and thanksgiving,
to your call
to be a light to each other
and to the world.
Continue to form us in your body,
centered in your Eucharist.
We ask you, to give us the vision

To know your mission,
and to make it visible in our parish
of St. William and our sister parish St. Anthony,
and to the world. Amen.