

**ST PAUL'S (RONDEBOSCH)  
THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER (YEAR B)  
SUNDAY: 18 APRIL 2021**

**READINGS: ACTS 3:12-19// PSALM 4//  
1JOHN 3:1-7// LUKE 24:36-48**

.....  
*God of new beginnings, we ask you to meet us on our journeys. Interrupt our lives with the light of your living truth. Transform and teach us to bear witness to a community. And make us ready to be changed. Amen*

**Jesus stood among them and said to them: Peace be with you, and they were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them “Why are you troubled and why doubts in your mind. Look at my hands and my feet. It is myself touch and see” You are witnesses of these things**

Today we come to Luke’s account of what happened on that Easter night.

In Luke 24:13-35, we learn that Jesus appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Once they recognized him, Jesus vanished from their sight. Then they immediately went to Jerusalem, a journey of about seven miles. When they arrived in Jerusalem, they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, and told them they have seen the risen Lord. And as they are telling their story, Jesus appears to them all.

***What did Jesus say?*** (As in John’s Gospel reading of last week) Jesus said “***Peace be with you.***” The living Jesus Christ stands in the midst of his people and he says to them, “***Peace be with you.***” Here was Peter who had denied him three times and other disciples who had ran away, shamefully forsaking him, leaving him alone in the hands of the vicious Temple guard. The apostles had broken their promises ‘never’ to leave him. They had quickly forgotten their vain boast that they were ready to die with him. All of them were proven to be backsliders and cowards after being the recipients of such loving pastoral care, with many warnings and encouragements. Think of all that they had been privileged to hear and see, and yet they left him all alone. They forgot all he had spoken to them about his death and resurrection and that Satan would come and

sift them. Then he comes to them, the conqueror of the grave, and what does he say? *“How could you do that? How could you run away and leave me alone? I can’t remember seeing many of you at Calvary. Wasn’t I so good to you? Is that the way you rewarded me? I’m really disappointed in you.”* No. Not a word like that.

He comes to them the very day he rises and he says to them, ***“Peace be with you!”*** He speaks of reconciling pardoning mercy.

Most people would expect, if they had betrayed their God, that when or if that God returned, there would be punishment and retribution. But Jesus returns bringing peace, wholeness, restoration, forgiveness.

This is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. When we least deserve it and when we deserve his rebuke he then comes and smiles and speaks of peace with God through him. He is more ready to pardon us than we are willing to acknowledge that we need his pardon. There is immeasurable willingness in his heart to forgive and forgive and forgive and never stop forgiving us, every day of our lives. He will forgive our same repeated sins. He will forgive our very worst sins.

***How did the disciples respond?***

In v 37 we read ***“They were startled and frightened thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, why are you so troubled and why do doubts rise in your minds. Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself touch me and see***

They were startled and frightened. Of course they were. If it were a ghost who wouldn’t be startled and frightened?

He’s not asking for blind faith from them, or irrational acceptance that it is he. *“See here my visible wounds! //scars. See what I have suffered because of my love for you, to obtain your pardon. Touch me! Grab me!”* he urges them

***My dear friends we all have our own wounds/scars-- some physical because maybe scars of falling from a bicycle or from an operation and we still have the marks reminding us from that incident but then there are the emotional and psychologic scars and wounds inflicted on us because of loved ones/ friends/ colleagues who hurt us.***

Maybe the scars of a failed marriage // the scars of an abusive relationship//scars of a son/daughter who has lost their way in life – who are struggling with substance abuse// our young people the scars of bullying at

school// the scars of being betrayed by a best friend //maybe you have been unfairly dismissed because of a colleague you trusted//

***What are your scars this morning?***

And we know it's hard to show our scars (*we hide them how many of you are sitting here this morning still carrying your scars from 5/10/20 years ago?*). It's hard to trust someone enough to reveal your weaknesses and frailties. It makes you vulnerable. And, of course, vulnerability comes with risks. When we are vulnerable, we are much more open to further hurt. Revealing your scars means revealing your weaknesses and trusting that the one you're opening up to isn't going to turn around and take advantage of that vulnerability.—***but Jesus is saying to you this morning come to me with your scars trust me.***

The risen Christ insists that his followers see and touch the wounds. He wants us to see that he still carries all our sorrow, all our shame, all the vulnerability that we know as humans. In so doing, Christ our God declares, “No, it's not all over, and I have not left you behind. I have not left you alone with your wounds//scars.

“I am Emmanuel.” That wonderful name meaning “God is with us.” The living Lord wants us to see that he is still Emmanuel through his death and in his resurrection. I am your Emmanuel, yes, all you who struggle, all who have been through the kinds of things that you won't get over and you won't forget. The risen Christ insists that we see and touch his wounds because they are signs of love. They allow us to see deep into God's heart. Instead of coming to us in a perfect, wound-free, scar-free body, the risen Christ comes bearing the wounds that are a sign of his perfect love. He comes not in a perfect body, but with a perfect love and a perfect presence.

In v41 we read ***‘And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement he asked them. Do you have something to eat. They gave him a piece of broiled fish and he took it and ate it in their presence***

What is the significance of this? It is not only a proof of his risen-ness. Having a meal with someone declares peace between you, especially if there had been alienation. It declares reconciliation, and here it is reconciliation between sinners and their offended God. (Between you and God/ Between me and God)

**And that is why we come to Church every week, with our doubts, confusions, fears and misunderstandings, our wounds, our scars, ours sinfulness to experience and be reminded of God's love, forgiveness, reconciliation and mercy to us , when we us the Body of Christ partake in the Holy Eucharist. Jesus is saying to us come to my table share in my meal because you are reconciled with me and God and I love you.**

## **CONCLUSION**

**From the Middle Ages comes this legend about a nun who claimed that she had a vision of Christ. The Bishop asked sister did you talk to him. And she said, yes I did, he continued 'if you have another vision ask Christ this question: What was the bishop's greatest sin before he became a bishop. He knew only God and his own confessor would know. About three months later the nun made an appointment to see the bishop. When she came in he said did you see our Lord again? Yes she replied Did you ask him the question of my sins Yes I did And what did he say She smiled and answered The Lord said I don't remember anymore.**

**Whatever guilty feelings you have this morning God has forgiven you sins better than that he can't remember it.**

**My dear friends can you forgive the person who inflicted the scars/ wounds in your life?**