

4.12.26

2nd Sunday Easter + Divine Mercy

Fr. Paul Cochran, S.J.

I think it's a very common phenomenon to have doubt. Many times, when we are uncertain, we want to reserve judgment, we want to reserve being positive about something until we're as sure as anything. When I was confirmed, many years ago, I chose the name Thomas, meaning this Thomas, the Doubter. My mom was rather perturbed about it.

“What’s wrong with another name?”

And I said, “Doubting is not a bad thing.”

It means that I'm in search of something. It means that I am still looking for a certain certitude, whether it be in science, which I studied or in faith. Doubt helps us grow. If we don't doubt, it means that we're taking things for granted.

But when Jesus came into that locked upper room, the disciples were fearful. First day of the week, they're gathered. They're fearful that what happened to Jesus is going happen to them. That the authorities are going to find them and do them in. But Jesus comes into their midst and does three things.

He first wishes them God's peace. “Peace be with you,” he says to them. And that's something our world is in desperate need of today. I think it's been, perhaps, in many era of the life of the world, there's always been conflict. But Jesus wants to bring peace to their hearts, and knowledge, and wisdom, through this gift of peace.

And then, he breathes on them. He brings them the gift of the spirit to take away doubts and fear. He’s strengthening them.

Then, he gives them a mission: Go out and proclaim this good news. Proclaim that the Christ is alive and to have hope, to have joy. That's what we hear in those first two readings. The early church had incredible joy. They were expecting Jesus to come back any moment. And so, they were selling things, and living together, breaking bread, and sharing their experiences of Jesus. It probably wore off after a while, when year after year, when they keep repeating the crucifixion resurrection story, they say, maybe he's taking his time. And then some doubt comes in...and with that doubt, there was probably some hesitation and some frustration.

One of our former pastors here, Fr. Mike Moynihan, loved poetry, and he puts out a weekly little newsletter, based upon some of his old pastor reflections, and poetry. This week, for the second,

week of Easter, it included a poem, which kind of caught by eye. From the poet, Francis Dorff. It speaks about doors. The poem reads,

When every single thing
becomes a door
that opens to eternity
and we pass through
as we could never do before.

And then we'll wonder why
we've spent so many years
just stopping at these doors;
why we've always pulled up short,
and turned around,
and walked away,
instead of passing through.

Doors are an incredible metaphor, because they go from one space to another, maybe from one reality to another reality. But the early church saw Jesus as a door. And that how he passed through those doors to greet the disciples and greet the others who were ready to receive him. And he reached out to Thomas, the Doubter, and said, "Stop, disbelieving and believe." And that's a real gift to us. That when we doubt, when we stand at the door, whatever kind of door it is, whether it's a door, face, adore, fear, adore, unknowing, we have the courage and the love and the strength that Jesus gives us in the spirit to go through those doors and to be his people for the world. Strengthened by the Spirit, we are mission to be God's people for our world, for our neighborhood, for our families, for one another. There's a lot of need in this world for people to go through doors that seem to be locked and uninviting, for fear of what lies beyond the doors. And yet with the courage of Jesus, when we go through those doors, we find Jesus on the other side and the people we have yet to meet and the situations we have yet to encounter.

Let us take courage that through the gift of faith, the spirit, the gift we have been given, that has been handed onto us in the early church, that we can be the hands and the voice and the love of Jesus for one another.