

Second Sunday in Easter
Deacon Ben Remmert
Sunday, April 12, 2026

Acts 2:14a, 22-32

Psalm 16

1 Peter 1:3-9

John 20:19-31

Alleluia. Christ is risen. **He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

Let's start at an obvious place for the week after Easter Sunday. The baskets are empty; the colored grass has been vacuumed up. Beautiful cards have been put away. Our nice Easter clothes are back in the closet. The Easter lilies are taken away to be planted. All that is left are a few jellybeans and Cadbury eggs to finish. Easter is over ... or is it? I mean why can't we leave out our Easter decorations much like we do for Christmas holiday? According to my children, the time has passed for Easter eggs, bunnies, and all that spring stuff. But when I ask about celebrating Jesus' resurrection, my children say, "we never stop." Dear friends, if we want the meaning of Jesus' resurrection to continue and never stop, let us look at our Gospel reading and discuss three components to Jesus' appearance to the disciples that can be helpful to us as we continue our journey of faith: place, peace, and presence.

Among the many details of the Easter story are some that are simple – easy to miss. One of them is place – the place where Jesus chose to meet His disciples after He rose to life. He met them, not in a grand sanctuary or palace, not in their homes, not by the Sea of Galilee, not in the Garden of Gethsemane, but in a locked room that was hidden. Why there? Precisely because it was the place where the disciples were huddled together in fear. Several times, John emphasizes a motif of fear (7:13; 9:22; 12:42; 16:2) throughout his gospel. This fear is connected to their confession that Jesus is the Messiah; publicly declaring this could lead to expulsion from the synagogue, making faith an act with significant social risk. Moreover, they had witnessed Jesus' agonizing death, and, no doubt, feared that something similar could happen to them. To quiet and reassure them, Jesus went to them where they were at.

Take heart, dear friends because He does the same for us - He meets us where we are – wherever that may be. Certainly, here in a beautiful nave, but also in hectic places of work, in sterile hospital settings, in dark rooms in the middle of the night, in noisy classrooms, in our cars as we travel, in our homes. Wherever we are, because He loves us, God comes to meet us where we are. We are reminded by the apostle Peter that when we are in despair, we should look to God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit as the only source of hope, peace, and eternal love. We may be used to praising God when things turn out good, but in trials, hopelessness, sickness, and tribulation, we need to continue to praise God.

The place where Jesus meets us matters, not because of its beauty or simplicity, but because wherever it is, it is the place He comes to give us peace. True peace – peace of heart to quiet fears, peace of mind to still doubts, peace when there is turbulence in our families and marriages, peace when jobs are tenuous and health is fragile. When you do a dictionary search for the opposite of peace, you find words that are mingled by the effects of sin: discord, trouble, conflict, war, fighting, upheaval, anxiety, worry – life much as we know and live now.

To quiet the disciples – and us - Jesus reassured them, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives.” What does His peace look like? What does it feel like? Try this. Two artists were commissioned by a benefactor to paint a portrait of peace – true peace. They went their separate ways and set about to illustrate the meaning of peace. When it was time to show their work, the first artist unveiled a canvas depicting a carefree boy sitting in a rowboat on a placid lake without a ripple to disturb the surface. The sky was blue, the flowers bright, the clouds white and fluffing, a dog sleepy quietly on the shore. Everything looked serene. It was quite good. Then, when the other artist unveiled her work, it illustrated a black sky with ominous clouds, howling winds, driving rain, blowing leaves, bent over flowers, a torrent of rain. But, as you looked closer, you could see in the crevasse of an oak tree, that a bird had built its nest there, and, despite the turbulence around her, the mother bird sat peacefully brooding her eggs. Here she was safe from her predatory enemies, shielded and protected from the raging storm. Even more than the first, it was peace – like the days after Easter in a locked room with fearful disciples. God is with us, no matter how dark the days are, and in our text, we are reminded that we are not left alone.

After reminding the disciples that they will be sent into the world, continuing his mission and love and salvation, Jesus then breathes on them and says, “Receive the Holy Spirit,” empowering them (and us) for their ongoing work with God’s presence and guidance. In Jesus’s absence, the Spirit is crucial for guidance, remembrance, and empowerment of us and our ministry. As we receive the Holy Spirit, we are invited to be present in the lives of all people, to be share the peace of Christ, and to be present in the moment now.

With Jesus there is grace, peace, forgiveness and new life – the blessings that are ours through His sacrificial death and triumphant resurrection. Let’s do all that we can to be with Him and each other as God is at work here and now. Salvation is not just a future reality but is with us now. Amen.