

HOMILY 2ND SUN EASTER YRA 2017

During the Easter season we celebrate the fact that Jesus rose from the dead and lives among us today. Jesus was not resuscitated to what he was before, but he rose to new life with a glorified body. The Catholic Church teaches that our bodies will be raised on the last day and we will be united with a glorified body. Did you ever wonder what that glorified body will be like? I think I may want to be 25 years old any way better looking than I actually was at 25. Do you think that is possible? Maybe we can learn from what we know about Jesus glorified body. He retains the scars from the crucifixion, probably the most extreme suffering he experienced when he had a human body. If all of us were 25 and much better looking than we actually were, we would not recognize each other. We would have to spend all eternity with strangers! In reality, our scars are what make us who we are. It is our scars, our woundedness that defines us. Our scars make us real. Just like a child and his or her blankie. They do not want a new one. They want the old one that is worn and torn and stained. We all have scars inside and out. That scar on my face that reminds me of the stupid thing I did to hurt myself and the lesson that I learned from that. The scar from the surgery that made me well and all the suffering that I had to go through to get well. Those internal scars when a friend betrayed me, when I experienced the death of someone I love, the failures that I learned great lessons from. It is our scars that make us who we are. On second thought, I think I am going to keep them all.

In the Gospel reading we encounter doubting Thomas. He had a hard time believing that Jesus had risen from the dead. He had doubts about certain aspects of his faith. We sometimes have these doubts as well. I think God intends for us to struggle with the great questions of our faith. That is how we develop a mature and strong faith. Jesus could have made a huge spectacle around the resurrection so that we could not help but believe, but he did not do that.

We just discovered the empty tomb. Belief and doubt can co-exist. Today, I think sometimes people leave the Catholic Church because they disagree with something that the Catholic Church does or teaches. The Church is not perfect. It is made up of imperfect human beings. We can have our doubts about certain aspects of our faith and still continue serving Christ as if we have no doubts at all. That is what Thomas did. He did not leave the other disciples. He continued with them and that is where he worked out some of the answers. We all have some doubts.

Sometimes we doubt the existence of God or God's love for us when suffering comes into our lives, particularly when bad things happen to good people, people who do not deserve it. How could God let this happen? We have to remember that God does not cause the suffering, he cries with us in our suffering. We can tell God: "I love you and believe in you even if I am uncertain whether or how you are with me. This will get us through the suffering to the other side. Remember it is our suffering, our scars that make us real, that make us wise. And you may not get answers to all of your questions, but the older I get the more I realize it is not about getting the answers as much as living the questions. We certainly do not look for suffering, but we need to embrace it when it comes into our lives. We can help each other through our woundedness. I can better help you if I have lived through something similar to what you are going through. We also cannot be afraid of suffering. That is how we can really help others. We need to enter into their lives. We need to enter into painful situations. We need to take the risk of being hurt ourselves in the process. If we are unwilling to take that risk, our relationships are shallow and superficial and we cannot really help anyone. Jesus saved us through vulnerability rather than power. I think I am going to hang on to all of my scars. I earned them.