

## HOMILY 2<sup>ND</sup> SUN EASTER YRB 2021

How many of you know Padma Lakshmi? She is probably best known as the executive producer and host of the TV show *Top Chef*. When she was just 14 years old, she was in a terrible car accident. Her arm was severely injured, and the doctors did not think she would ever regain the use of her arm. She had many surgeries and regained the use of her arm; but as her arm got better, the scar got worse and worse. She tried to hide the scar for many years. When she got a little older, she started modeling. The clients would tell her agent, well she is kind of pretty, but that scar. Then she got a job with a well known photographer who wanted to do a photo shot with her. After that her agent got calls requesting the model with the scar. What had started out to be a constant reminder of a lot of suffering in her life and cause for shame for years, but eventually became an asset.

In the Gospel reading, we hear that Jesus appeared to the disciples in the upper room; however, Thomas was not with them at the time. When the disciples told him of the appearance, Thomas told them that unless he sees the scars in his hands and side, he will not believe. Why did Thomas want to see the scars? I think that he wanted to see the scars because he felt that this would be a sure sign that it was Jesus. Why did Jesus retain his scars in his glorified body? When I think of glorified body, I think of a body that is more perfect, glorified. But I think our scars make us who we are. The scars are a big part of who we are, and I do not think we want to get rid of them.

All of us have scars. We get some of them through surgeries, accidents, and violence. Some of them are visible scars on our body. Some of them are internal, emotional, or spiritual. The scars start out as wounds. When we receive the wounds, internal or external, physical, emotional, or spiritual, they hurt. And it takes time to heal from these wounds. And we are pretty good about taking care of those physical wounds. It is just like if you have a cut on your leg. If you just ignore the cut, it is likely to get infected and get worse. We need to examine the wound, clean it, maybe

bandage it, and maybe even get a few stitches. We are not as attentive to our internal emotional or spiritual wounds. Sometimes we think we can hide them, push them down, try and pretend that they do not exist. But if we do that, they usually do not go away. They usually get worse. We have to care for our emotional and spiritual wounds the way we care for our physical wounds. Once our wounds heal, they can become scars. We can live with the scars. They are a reminder of what we were able to live through and accomplish and we may eventually come to see them as assets, just the way that Padma Lakshmi was able to do. But if we do not care for our wounds, they just remain wounds; they will continue to be painful and will continue to have a negative impact on our lives.

The disciples that were gathered in the upper room were all disappointed, disillusioned, and dejected. Things did not happen the way they expected them to happen. But Jesus loved them and appeared to them to help them heal. He offered them peace multiple times in the Gospel reading. We cannot have real peace in our lives when we are wounded until we heal. Thomas doubted Jesus but Jesus never stopped loving him. Jesus made a second appearance just for him. Sometimes we are wounded by God when things do not go the way we want them to. Sometimes we want to abandon God, but he will never abandon us. He will continue to love and care for us.

None of us achieve anything of importance in our lives without getting wounded, but if we care for the wounds and let them heal, those permanent scars can become assets. Do you have wounds that you have not taken care of, that you are trying to ignore? What do you need to do to help the healing process? Do you need to talk to someone? Do you need to see a therapist? Do you need to forgive? Do you need to attempt to reconcile? Do you need to help someone? By helping others we can heal ourselves. Do you need to bring them to God in prayer? If you ignore the wounds they will never go away. Help your wounds become scars. Jesus will never abandon and he will be with you whatever you need to do.