

Easter 2 (B) 2018

We continue the celebration of Easter – the central feast of our faith. So, HAPPY EASTER to all of you again!

We celebrate life, new life. And we gather today as we do every Saturday/Sunday because Jesus lives. Jesus who was born and lived on this earth; whose whole meaning and purpose of his mission is found in the Eucharist: I have come to offer my body and pour out my blood for others. I have come to tell you and to show you that the only path to real life and happiness is the path of unselfish love.

We have been through Good Friday, the emptiness of Saturday and know that the path of unselfish love is difficult. Every act of unselfish love is a little dying. But the celebration of Jesus' resurrection is a sign to us of the new life that unselfish acts and service brings.

Unselfish Service is the hallmark of the Christian Community. Most likely you are surrounded by acts of unselfish service and are, perhaps, unaware of this service or haven't reflected on the things people do for others as deep and profound expressions of the love that God teaches us to have and to do. Most parishes have Outreach groups as we do or a St. Vincent dePaul Society that assists those in need with money, food, clothing, even housing. The City of Boston is filled with houses that serve the poor with many volunteers, some from this parish, who donate time as well as skills and resources to lift the poor out of the gutters and from under the bridges. There are many service programs right here at Boston College and at most colleges and universities as well as high schools. My most recent involvement was with BC groups when we would come back with stories about how the poor actually helped us. Many women and men, ordained and not ordained, spend countless hours caring for you and all the people in unbelievable ways as you journey from birth through this life to the life promised and guaranteed by this feast of the

Resurrection. We pray for each other. We assist the doubters like Thomas in today's gospel. We gather in prayer each week at the Eucharist and share the body and blood of Christ. With Christ we are church, the faith community, all of us are ministers of God's word, all of us light up the darkness and help each other towards the light of life.

I said that many of us are unaware or haven't reflected on the countless acts of service that surround us, partly because we get busy with our lives and partly because many of the good deeds we do, remain anonymous- perhaps out of a sense of humility- but it can't be that way anymore. We are not looking for praise and glory but we need to let our light shine so that others can know Christ. We need to be the apostles of today to help the Thomas's understand that Christ lives and is among us. There are too many who don't even know we just celebrated Easter, the resurrection of the Lord. They haven't darkened the doors of churches in a long time. But they will come to know Christ and His journey of love by who we are, by the way we live, what we say and what we do. People who believe in the Lord Jesus and follow his commandment of love can't be the best kept secret in the world. We need to be more public and more Christian so others in our community will be encouraged and still others outside our community will see how we love one another and how we desire peace and justice for all.

In today's gospel Jesus came and stood in the middle of the disciples who were hiding behind locked doors. He blessed them with peace and then said "as the Father has sent me (from heaven to earth), so I send you (out of this room and into the world)." He breathed on them, the scriptures say, and they received the Holy Spirit. How many of us are still hiding behind locked doors? We've been sent out to preach forgiveness and love, justice and peace.

What is happening in our world today is a tragedy to be sure; it is contrary to our way of living the gospel of love and mercy, the message of the Risen Lord. It is an aberration. This aberration

has captured the attention of the whole world unfortunately. Would that the good deeds we do capture the attention. Would that the love to which we committed ourselves in our baptismal promises had been shared by all. Maybe these shameful actions and stories, real and alleged, would never have happened and continue to happen.

It is not our role to judge but it is our role to call each other to accountability in the faith, but even more than that, it is our role to be personally genuine and authentic companions of Jesus as we go along the road to the life promised us by Jesus' Resurrection.

Gandhi of India said many years ago, "If I met a genuine Christian, I would become one."

Jesus Christ is risen. The Scriptures are filled with stories of the early believers. They celebrated His life in the Eucharist as we celebrate His life in the Eucharist today. Eucharist means thank you, so we say thank you to God for the gift of his Son, for His mercy, and we ask for God's help to be authentic companions and a light for others in imitation of the Risen Lord who is our light.