

2nd Sunday of Easter – Year B – Pr. Patti Axel – April 11, 2021

Resurrected Lord, you offer Peace and love and acceptance when we are confused and scared and lonely. You offer love from your very life, death and resurrection and you keep coming back to make sure we are still following. Lord, we are beyond grateful for all of this and ask for your help and encouragement to share this story; your story and our story! May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer!

I don't have a file for that - Sometimes we experience a thing that goes far beyond what we can comprehend with the coping skills we have on hand. This happens quite often in the information drenched world we live in. This happened as well in the world that Jesus shared with his disciples. We need to experience a thing to get an idea about how to understand it and comprehend its meaning. Come and See; a response you hear a lot in John's Gospel seems to say - this is my experience and I want you to see it and decide for yourself. We see and absorb and file it away for future use,

It happened with Philip and Nathaniel - Philip approaches Nathaniel and says, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth" to which Nathaniel responds - Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Philip offers his Come and See for Nathaniel to figure out for himself.

It happened with the Samaritan woman at the well. "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done!" Many believed because of her but they had to experience him for themselves and answer her question of "this couldn't be the Messiah, could it? only after they had spent a few days visiting with him. She offered her Come and See and moved out of the way so they could get to know Jesus too.

Mary, early that morning, had confused Jesus for the gardener and asked him to tell her where they had put her friend's body so she could care for it and didn't recognize him until she heard him speak her name, Then she shocked the stuffing out of the disciples when she exclaimed, "I have seen the Lord!" John doesn't say they don't take her word for it but Jesus shows them his hand and his side and **then** they rejoiced! Jesus finishes Mary's Come and See with his wounded yet whole resurrected body.

In each instance it takes some time and personal experience to fully relate to what is happening. The same thing happens with Thomas as we shall soon see but not before Jesus breathes on them the Spirit of God.

Peace be with you! Jesus enters into this place of fear and confusion and shares with them what he shares with God and the Spirit; a relationship of love, connection and joy. Jesus draws them into the peace of knowing and belonging and sends them as he himself has been sent. He then breathes on them the promised Holy Spirit, who he had spoken of just three nights before, which probably feels like a lifetime at this point. He offers the gift of forgiveness and welcome. A newer understanding of the translation helps us see that what first was understood as the ability to withhold forgiveness was actually the gift of embrace and inclusion of the other. That is much more consistent with the life-giving presence of the crucified and risen one.

Now Thomas enters the scene a week later when Jesus returns to the same room where the disciples are still gathered with the door closed and offers the same greeting, Peace be with You! Directing his attention to Thomas he invites him to look at and touch his hands and side. Come and See Thomas, it is I and Thomas believes. Jesus offers his blessing to Thomas's confession but also to our belief, not because we see but because we have heard the words of Scripture told throughout the ages.

Jesus comes offering life and the visible evidence of his suffering and death. He keeps coming back and reveals himself to us in the gift of the Good News, written so that we may come to believe and in our belief to have new life.

Sooo - what do we do with this wonderful news? We can't possibly keep it a secret - it is too good Not to Share!!!

Come and See Jesus who is alive!

Come and See that Jesus has taken away the sting of death and replaced it with life eternal for all who believe.

Come and See that we are included in the loving and life-giving relationship of the Triune God!

Come and See that this news is too marvelous to keep to ourselves but begs to be shared with anyone who will listen.

Jesus died and was raised for you and you and me and everyone who hears and believes. It is not up to us to tell others they are wrong or missing out. It is up to us to tell our story, to invite them to Come and See the story of our God who is infinitely patient and forever forgiving and extravagantly loving. Then we can say Come and See and invite them into a life beyond their wildest imagination.

I do have a file for that!
Praise the Lord! Amen and Alleluia!!