

## Lectio Divina. Second Sunday of Easter. Cycle C

*Vice Province of Africa. Sr. Téwindé Céline SAWADOGO, April 24, 2022.- The Risen One Gives Us Peace.*

### GOSPEL

**John 20:19-31.**

“On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. [Jesus] said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.” Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.” Thomas answered and said to him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.” Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of [his] disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may [come to] believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.”

### WHAT DOES THE TEXT TELLS ME

The feast of the Resurrection is certainly a source of joy but for the community of believers, its meaning goes beyond a simple external celebration. Thus through this text we can see three inseparable signs of the resurrection:

In the first place, the Evangelist John presents Feast of the Resurrection as a celebration of liberation that is something new: The Risen Lord offers Peace to the disciples who were locked up by fear. The Resurrection of Christ brings a new assurance for the wavering faith of the disciples. There is no longer room for doubt, Christ has overcome death and lives forever in the glory of the Father.

Secondly, there is the joy awakened in the disciples by the presence of the Risen Lord in their midst. Christ's return gives them confidence. It is a great source of joy and deep security that

reveals that everything did not come to an end, but that everything has just begun. The presence of the Risen One renews and strengthens communion within the community of the disciples. He heals all fear and leaves room for peace and joy.

Third, there is proclamation: Peace inspires them to openness and joy, it is worth sharing. Salvation needs to be proclaimed. Like a living flame, Jesus wants salvation to reach the whole world, for He died for all, not just for a limited community. Jesus breathes his Spirit upon the disciples to strengthen them in this task. This is the mission that the Risen One entrusts to the community of his disciples, eyewitnesses of his death and resurrection and in whom the peace and joy triggered by his presence offers them security. This is why Jesus gives them His Spirit.

## **MEDITATION**

Fear in general is an attitude, a feeling that takes hold of those who lack conviction. Fear isolates and kills slowly but surely those who allow themselves to be imprisoned in it, without freeing themselves as soon as possible. Fear prevents one from opening up to others and the community to grow, even if one takes many risks. While Christ emerges triumphant from the tomb, the community of disciples is still locked in a spiritual tomb. That is why the risen Jesus comes to them to remove all obstructions and give them a liberating peace: "Peace be upon you" (Jn 20:19c) Jesus insists on this gift at least three times in the text. Then they move from fear to safety. You cannot recognize the risen one and then remain the same as before. Easter is then for the Christians, the feast of renewal: renewal in peace, forgiveness, faith... Christ's resurrection is the guarantee of deliverance from our sins. From this liberation springs peace, joy, reconciliation and a new energy for community life.

Even today, the transcendent presence of Christ is manifested in an indisputable way within the community. This presence allows the disciples to be renewed with the power of the Spirit that communicates the Risen One to every baptized person for their mission: "Receive the Holy Spirit." Like Thomas, who was absent on the first day when Jesus appeared to the disciples, it also happens to us to think that everything is finished and that it is time to return to our activities. Fortunately, eight days later, the one named the unbeliever will also have the opportunity to overcome his doubts by touching Christ with his hand and confessing his faith. Resurrected Jesus is also present in his Church and in our lives. Once again, he spreads his peace in the ecclesial community: "Peace be upon you" His Spirit also breathes: "Receive the Holy Spirit". His presence renews the faith of every Christian and ensures communion in the midst of our communities. In addition, it impels us to come out of our cloisters to witness to a life of fraternity, love, solidarity, charity and truth. Then we will be able to proclaim the Good News to all men and women: "Just as the Father has sent me, I also send you" (Jn. 20:21). Baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ, every Christian becomes a true missionary, as a member of the ecclesial community.

Jesus knows our human frailties and it is He who takes the initiative to come to meet us, to kindle in us the strength to begin anew a life of communion with Him and with the community. His presence assures us of all the gifts that we need so that we can:

- come out of our fears and welcome the peace and joy that the Risen One gives us.
- share it with those around us
- deepen our faith in Resurrected Christ
- commit ourselves to an effective communion with the Church.
- take part in the mission that the Risen Lord entrusts to the Church.

Only trust in the active presence of the Risen One will make us authentic missionaries so that his peace and joy may reach the whole world.

## **PRAYER**

Lord, come to meet me in the prison of my loneliness and my fears as you did with your disciples. I need your presence, your peace and your joy. I thirst for your deliverance. You who have overcome death and lives forever, remove my shadows and my doubts forever and shine your light in my life. Give me the grace to proclaim my faith in you without fear or fatigue in imitation of St. Thomas. You who revive the faith of your people through your resurrection, make us your true witnesses of this mystery.

## **CONTEMPLATION**

Lord, we do not know how to thank You for the wonderful gift You have given us by giving your life for our salvation. How can I thank you Lord for the good you have done to me?

- Let us thank the Lord for the new life He gives us through His Resurrection.
- Let us ask him to encourage his missionary zeal and the joy of the Gospel so that we may become authentic witnesses capable of convincing a world thirsting for justice and true peace.
- Let us entrust to his mercy our world of terrorism and war and ask the one who has conquered death, to bring us his peace,
- Let us entrust to Him all who do not yet know Him and those who follow the values of this world so that He may give them His Spirit and lead them to believe.
- Let us ask him for fervor and grace of witness for the Church and all Christians.

At the end, let us ask all the faithful departed who share his glory in the Kingdom of Heaven to intercede for us.