

***SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER, APRIL 25, 2014***

***WELCOME TO THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER***

***LET'S BEGIN WITH A LITTLE QUIZ***

***OF COURSE, WE START WITH AN EASY QUESTION BUT THEN IT GETS  
MORE DIFFICULT....***

***HOW MANY DAYS IN LENT? 40***

***HOW MANY DAYS IN EASTER? ONE - SOME WOULD SAY - BUT 50***

***WE DO EASTER UNTIL PENTECOST.....***

***ISN'T THAT GREAT - WE HAVE A FAITH -***

***THAT DOESN'T ASK US TO DO 40 DAYS OF LENT AND ONLY GET ONE DAY  
OF EASTER TO CELEBRATE...***

***IT GIVES US 50 DAYS TO CELEBRATE .....***

***AND WE ARE VERY GOOD AT DOING EASTER AREN'T WE.....***

***FLOWERS, VESTMENTS, FESTIVE HYMNS...***

***WE "PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS".....ALLELUIA!!!***

***THE LORD IS RISEN!!!***

***SO HERE WE ARE AT THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER....***

***LILIES ARE BEGINNING TO BROWN AROUND THE EDGES....***

***THE CHOCOLATE BUNNIES ARE GONE....***

***EASTER DRESS HAS BEEN PUT AWAY....***

***AND THE IMPACT OF THOSE "ALLELUIAS" IS BEGINNING TO FADE....***

***AS WE GET BACK TO BUSINESS AS USUAL.....***

***THERE'S NO QUESTION THAT WE KNOW HOW TO DO EASTER AS AN EVENT***

**- THE QUESTION THAT COMES UP THIS MORNING IS:**

**HOW ARE WE AT EASTER AS A WAY OF LIFE?**

**THAT'S THE CHALLENGE -**

**TO BE EASTER PEOPLE IN A GOOD FRIDAY WORLD!**

**THE GREAT EASTER TRUTH IS NOT THAT WE ARE GOING TO LIVE NEWLY  
AFTER DEATH, BUT THAT WE ARE TO BE NEW HERE AND NOW IN THE  
POWER OF THE RESURRECTION....**

**OF COURSE, THAT IS EASIER SAID THAN DONE....**

**AS THE LILIES FADE AND THE CHOCOLATE GETS EATEN, IT'S VERY EASY  
TO MAKE EASTER A SUNDAY TO REMEMBER RATHER THAN A TRUTH TO  
LIVE...**

**AND WE ARE IN GOOD COMPANY.....**

**THE FIRST CHRISTIANS ALSO STRUGGLED .....TO BE EASTER PEOPLE  
TODAY WE HEAR OF THE DISCIPLES HUDDLING IN FEAR BEHIND LOCKED  
DOORS.....**

**AND, OF COURSE, WE HAVE THE DOUBTING THOMAS....**

**FORTUNATE FOR US THAT WE HAVE THE DOUBTING THOMAS BECAUSE  
IN HIM WE HAVE ONE OF THE MOST EXPLICIT AND DIRECT EXPRESSIONS  
OF FAITH IN THE RISEN CHRIST, "MY LORD AND MY GOD" ....**

**BECAUSE HE WAS HONEST ABOUT HIS DOUBTS....**

**HE WAS WILLING TO ACKNOWLEDGE HIS DOUBTS....**

**AND HE WAS WILLING TO STAY AT THE TABLE - AS WE SAY- OR RETURN  
TO THE TABLE - RETURN TO THE COMMUNITY - HE WAS ABLE TO**

***EXPERIENCE THE RISEN LORD ----***

***IT'S ALMOST LIKE HE NEEDED TO GET OUT OF HIS HEAD AND INTO HIS  
BODY....***

***IT'S ALMOST LIKE HE NEEDED TO DO IT WRONG BEFORE HE COULD GET  
IT RIGHT...***

***LIKE A LOT OF US***

***AS LONG AS HE WAS WILLING TO BE HONEST ABOUT WHERE HE WAS....***

***AND STAY IN RELATIONSHIP WITH A COMMUNITY....***

***AND NOTICE THAT IT WAS IN COMMUNITY THAT HE EXPERIENCED THE  
RISEN CHRIST ---***

***IT WAS IN COMMUNITY THAT THE RISEN CHRIST TOOK HIM WHERE HE  
WAS - WITH HIS DOUBTS AND HIS FEARS....***

***THE RISEN CHRIST INVITED HIM TO PUT HIS FINGER INTO HIS WOUNDS...***

***TO ME THIS SAYS A LOT ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE EASTER PEOPLE...***

***CERTAINLY, DELIGHT, EASTER JOY IS PART OF BEING AN EASTER  
PEOPLE...***

***BUT OUR FAITH IN THE RISEN LORD IS REVEALED IN THE CHALLENGING  
AND TROUBLING MOMENTS AS WELL....***

***THE TWELVE, REMEMBER WERE LOCKED IN....***

***THEY WERE IN FEAR...***

***THERE WAS A LACK OF PEACE....***

***PERHAPS THERE WAS CONFUSION, PAIN AND DIVISION...***

***IT IS INTO THAT SUFFERING AND PAIN THAT JESUS CAME...***

*EVEN THEN THE DISCIPLES WERE NOT ABLE TO EXPERIENCE FULLY THE JOY OF HIS PRESENCE WITHOUT ENTERING THE MYSTERY OF HIS WOUNDS.....*

*ONCE THEY SAW HIS HANDS AND HIS SIDE, THE REMNANTS OF HIS PAIN AND SORROW, THEY COULD REJOICE.....*

*THE EXPERIENCE OF FAITH IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF PAIN OR SORROW OR LOSS....*

*IT IS, RATHER, THE BEARING OF PAIN OR SORROW IN FAITH....*

*FAITH DOES NOT TAKE AWAY THE WOUNDS; IT TRANSFORMS THEM IN FAITH, FLAWS ARE NOT OBLITERATED; THEY ARE REFINED AND PURIFIED....*

*THOMAS, WHEN HE RETURNED TO A COMMUNITY OF FAITH, DISCOVERS CHRIST IN HIS UNBELIEF...*

*HE REFUSED TO BELIEVE UNTIL HE COULD SEE THE WOUNDS - ENTER THE WOUNDS....*

*HOW RIGHT HE WAS....*

*FAITH MUST BE FOUND AS MUCH IN THE WOUNDS OF LIFE AS IN THE JOYS OF LIFE...*

*AND ONCE HE ENCOUNTERED THE WOUNDS A MOST AMAZING FAITH EMERGED, "MY LORD AND MY GOD".....*

*OUR FAITH, OUR BELIEF, IS FINALLY FELT AND EXPRESSED NOT IN SHEER JOY ALONE, BUT IN ARDUOUS TRIAL, IN FEAR, IN WORRY AND DOUBT AT TIMES....*

***THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE EASTER PEOPLE IN A GOOD FRIDAY  
WORLD.....***

***THESE LACKS, THESE WOUNDS, THESE TRIALS MAKE FAITH SHINE ALL  
THE MORE AND THE HEARTS THAT HOLD SUCH FAITH MORE PRECIOUS  
THAN GOLD....***

***THINK HERE OF MOTHER THERESA....***

***HER LIFE, HER TRIALS, HER DARKNESS, HER FAITH IN THE POWER OF  
THE RISEN CHRIST.....***

***AS OUR EUCHARIST PROCEEDS LET US PRAY THAT IN THE BREAKING OF  
THE BREAD OUR EYES MAY BE OPENED AND WE MAY RECOGNIZE THE  
PRESENCE OF THE RISEN CHRIST IN OUR MIDST.....***

***AS WE CONTINUE TO CELEBRATE THE 50 DAYS OF EASTER***