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Second Sunday of Easter: Our Lady, Queen of Peace

This was another terrible week in Boston, at least for the Church there. Bad news about money, money that has to be spent on the consequences of the scandal of evil, money that needs to be saved and not spent on important programs that are at the heart of the Church. In the middle of it all, a man whose life has been spent with little to no money, a poor Capuchin friar turned bishop to archbishop to cardinal, spoke.

' 'I think in general, for many Catholics, the crisis has caused us to focus more on what is essential, why we are a church, why we are Catholics, who our God is, and the vision he's given to us."

Crisis makes us do that: focus on what is essential, said Cardinal O'Malley.

Let's think about it: When there is a crisis in a family—say when a divorce seems inevitable and the most healthy decision, the first thoughts go toward the children. Their welfare is most essential.

When there is a crisis in our country, when we are in a war that—to date—has cost more than \$275 billion—and that is just the cost in dollars, not lives and environment and family displacement and separation, we focus not on partisan politics, but on peace-making and exit strategies, RIGHT?

It is fair to say that when we are stressed—whether personally, as a family, or even as a large community, perspective is the first thing that goes. Crisis/stress and perspective become strangers, not the intimate friends they need to be.

Welcome to a room in first century Palestine, on that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, when the friends of Jesus were in panic, their hearts were broken and they did not know what to do. They were in crisis; they had lost perspective. And, their panic and their broken hearts and their confusion are all healed by the resurrected Jesus. It was their **experience** of the resurrection that gave them peace, the biblical word for perspective.

The only way for them to make sense of the nonsense of their lives was to experience the resurrection of Jesus. And, he made it happen for them.

[Develop:] Contrast the room in the gospel with community life in the first reading. Key difference: "With great power the apostles bore **witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus**, and great favor was accorded them all."

In our Church, in our faith, NOTHING is more important than the resurrection of Jesus. NOTHING. It is even the climax and conclusion of the creed we say EVERY Sunday! “We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.”

Isn't interesting that in a creed, we say that “we look for the resurrection” instead of “we believe in the resurrection” like we do all else in the creed? Looking for the resurrection involves that Easter perspective that we need every day, not just when we are in crisis.

Where do we first look for the resurrection? Sure, we look in those places where we find life and joy and goodness. Of course, they are obvious signs of the new life of Christ. But, where did those earliest disciples have to look for the resurrected Christ? They had to look deep into his wounds, they needed to touch them, explore them, and feel them as real.

We have to do the same. We have to touch and explore the wounds of our lives, of our family and Church and country to know that they can be healed.

If we believe in the power of the resurrection—and we do, then we believe that we share in the same new life that Jesus was given on that first Easter. Let's just **look**.

Jesus visits his friends, whom he last saw when he was being laughed at, scorned, beaten, scourged, stripped of his clothes and his dignity, and then murdered. How fascinating that they, not he, have the post-traumatic stress. They are the ones locked in the room, they are the ones paralyzed by fear, they are the ones who don't know where to go or how to move on. Jesus, on the other hand, has the courage to let his flesh be seen, to lift his shirt for his torso to be touched. The resurrection healed his indignities and his wounds and his memories and the betrayals of his friends in the room. Given the extent of the trauma he experienced, only the resurrection could cure such a person. But it did cure Jesus, and it will cure us.

Healing of our deepest wounds and hurts and sins can come only from the resurrection touches found in love. Many of us struggle with wounds to our spirits and bodies and reputations and sexualities and memories and families. Peace is the Easter wish of Jesus. How could anything other than God's mercy and compassion bring peace to such a beaten, broken man?

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are needed to see this picture.

But those earliest followers need to touch the pain and trauma. So do we. How can we ever heal our society's racism if we don't listen to its pain? How can we move beyond our Church's sexism and homophobia if we don't let women and gay people speak to us? How can we heal our own lives and insecurities if we never take the time to speak them

to God in prayer? How can we help millions of people commonly called immigrants if we don't first count them as people, just like our grandparents once were?

Probing our wounds is painful and tough, but is absolutely necessary. The good news is that we don't do it alone. And, even the deepest, toughest, most bruised and raw wounds can be healed. Jesus's were by the resurrection. So will ours! This is more than just perspective; this is our faith, and it is reason for our hope, a hope that impels us to love.