

Last week Mary arrived at the tomb and found that Jesus was no longer in it. Simon Peter and John go running to the tomb and realize that Mary's observation is correct, but then they quickly leave.

Mary stays at the tomb, weeping, where she sees two angels and a man, a man who turns out to be Jesus. She then runs to tell the others that she has seen Jesus raised from the dead. This brings us directly into this week's text. The disciples are locked in a room, seemingly confused, fearful, and grieving, uncertain about what is going on. Let us hear the story as told by John in Chapter 20, verses 19-31.

¶When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ¶After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then 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." ¶When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ¶If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

²⁴But Thomas (who was called the Twin¹¹), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told 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 in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” ²⁸Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹But these are written so that you may come to believe¹² that Jesus is the Messiah,¹³ the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

This is the word of God for the people of God...thanks be to God.

The disciples have had a chaotic few days: from Jesus' betrayal, arrest, murder, burial, and now resurrection. It is a whirlwind of events, events that when taken alone have a way of confusing the senses and shifting one's mind, imagine all of them in a singular week. When we consider this whole timeline together we can quickly understand just how disorienting it must have been for the disciples to live it out in real time. Richard Rohr talks about moments in life that have the ability to take us from order, through disorder, into reorder. The experiences of Holy Week and of Resurrection Sunday are all the moments of disorder, it is a changing from what has been known, what has been understood as big "T" Truth and through the disorder there becomes a reordering of the minds of those present and those who will follow to a new way of viewing the world, of understanding God, and of experiencing life in God.

But before getting to a more grounded feeling of reorder, before being confident about everything that has happened, and not feeling sea sick from all the jostling about, they and us must go through the disorder. We have had plenty of experience of disorder over the past 14 months. We have been tossed about in a prolonged season of grief and disorientation that has led us all to different points of reorder, many of which have yet to

be fully realized. It is in this disorder, in the going-through the pain and grief, in the staying that we experience the most growth.

This type of growth is painful, it's not a reordering of our choosing, and so we try to avoid it. We deny that things are changing, we beg and plead for things to go back to the way they were because life seemed so much easier or better or maybe if it wasn't easier or better, at least it was known. It's our human nature to avoid pain yet it's in the chaos and disorder that pain exists so that we can come to a new sense of order and in the case of the resurrection, a life-giving order that changes everything about how religion, God, humanity, and even creation are viewed.

We forget the importance of being present, of feeling the grief and pain of the world. But God is inviting us to stay, it's in the staying that we get to witness the risen Christ. Simon Peter and John missed the opportunity last week to stay in the disorder as they scurried back to hiding. It is in staying at the tomb that Mary gets a glimpse of Jesus, not to hold onto him in that place as David reminded us last week, but to see where he is leading us next. A movement from Order: what we thought we knew about the world, through Disorder: events that have a way of making us

reconsider and reevaluate all that we thought we knew, into Reorder: a new way of seeing the world.

As the disciples gather in the locked room Jesus enters the space, he enters into the chaos of the disciples locked away in fear, he enters in the middle of all the disorder, and what does he say to the disciples, “peace be with you.” In the middle of the disorder, Jesus offers peace. The resurrection is the moment when the whole perspective begins to shift, and it doesn’t immediately bring peace, it doesn’t immediately bring understanding and clarity, it brings confusion, it is the very definition of disordering, and yet Jesus shows up and brings peace. And, even as Jesus offers peace there is a time for the disciples of needing to sit in that, of learning to trust in what is happening and realizing how it will reorder their lives, all of which is too much for the human mind to take on in one day.

John doesn’t give us an account of the conversations that take place over the next week. He doesn’t tell us if they were all looking at one another dumbfounded by all that had taken place, he doesn’t tell us if they all had a strong sense of peace after their encounter with Jesus. He leaves it all to our imagination. And, I think that is on purpose, because what comes next is Jesus showing up again, for Thomas, the one who had missed the first encounter. I think John doesn’t give us the answers

because there isn't one answer, there isn't one specific way to encounter the resurrected, living Christ. It is different for each person.

The movement from order, through disorder, to reorder, is different for us all, it is a process, through which we each move at our own pace and in our own ways. And, even though it may be different for each of us, even though our relationship with Jesus is each different there is no question that Jesus shows up whether we are at the tomb, in the locked room, out on the streets, God shows up wherever we are to bring peace, to confirm time and time again that resurrection, new life, is for us here and now.

Each of us have experienced the past year differently, some of us have been in denial, not wanting to see the world change, some of us have embraced change to the point that we hope some aspects of pandemic life stay the same. And some of us are in between, wishing for some things to return as they were and for others to stay as they are. And, even in our different experiences we have all experienced grief and disorder. There has been a lot of pain and suffering personally and collectively. My fear as we begin to see the light at the end of this dark tunnel is that we are reaching for the old order, wanting to deny the disorder through which we've all been, resistant to the reorder God is offering, motivated by our instinct to avoid pain, to pretend that grief doesn't get to us, to lock

ourselves away in a room and hope it will just all go away, to deny the wounds, those visible and those invisible, that we receive from living.

And, so much of the pain we've felt could be ignored, most of us aren't bearing the pain as physical scars on our hands, or in our side as Jesus does, so much of the disorder could be ignored, if we just went back to the way things were, pretending that the pandemic isn't happening, that people aren't dying, and that all the ways the scales have fallen from our eyes over the past year was nothing more than some sort of hazy dream or nightmare. But, there is a reason we have been in this disorder, there is a reason the events of Holy Week are so disorienting, they are an invitation to experience the world anew.

The resurrected Christ offers us peace, right here, right now, in the middle of this chaotic world, in the middle of our grief, in the middle of the broken relationships, in the middle of the painfully ordered systems. Jesus is offering us peace. Not as an escape, but as a reminder that the resurrection of Christ was not for a future time, it is for now, it is for the living of these days and for God's kingdom to be realized in this world, in these moments, it is for the life everlasting that begins with each newly ordered and resurrected moment where there is life blooming out of death. So may we each embrace the disorienting resurrection not to hold

onto it for ourselves but so that others may come to know the peace of
Jesus, too.