



Bringing Home the Word

Third Sunday of Easter (B)
April 18, 2021

Sharing Our Wounds

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The glorified Jesus is not easy for the apostles to recognize. There is a deep truth here. The Twelve are startled and terrified to see Jesus again. In fact, they even think they are seeing a ghost. Their fear and lack of faith makes it impossible to see him for who he is—their resurrected Savior. Before they can truly see, they need to first accept him and believe.

And how does Jesus prove his identity to them? He shows them his wounds, the signs of his suffering and crucifixion. We often want to hide our wounds. We

are ashamed of them and afraid of how others will react if they really knew. But Jesus, unashamed, shows his wounds and uses them as signs of who he is.

There is a message for us here. We need to allow our brokenness to find fullness and resurrection in Christ. It is at that point that the love of God is perfected in us. First, we need to acknowledge our wounds and not bury or hide them. Then we need to admit our need for healing. Finally, through prayer, confession, and help from those who love us, we allow Jesus' redemptive love to wash over our wounds and give us renewal, rebirth, and healing.

As a result, like Jesus, we will no longer be ashamed of our wounds, but rather we will share them as evidence of the power of Jesus Christ. +

Sunday Readings

Acts 3:13-15, 17-19

The author of life you put to death, but God raised him from death; of this we are witnesses.

1 John 2:1-5a

Whoever says, "I know him," but does not obey his commandments, is a liar."

Luke 24:35-48

[Jesus] asked them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of baked fish; he took it and ate it in front of them.

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A Word from Pope Francis

We know that slander always kills. This "diabolical cancer" that arises from the desire to destroy the reputation of a person also attacks the ecclesial body and seriously damages it when, as a result of malicious interests or to cover up one's own inadequacies, people unite to denigrate someone.

—General Audience, September 25, 2019



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Is there an area of my heart and life where I need Jesus' healing?
- Am I confident in God's power to raise me up out of my weakness?

When Is It Time to Forgive?

By Fr. Bruce Lewandowski, CSsR

The first time it happened, I was speechless. A mother had come to the rectory. She didn't like the answer she'd gotten from the parish school's principal about the importance of timely tuition payments. When I gave her the same answer, she screamed at me. She called me a pedophile.

I had never been called that before. It's happened a few times since, once by a homeless man and another time by a stranger—and the shock hasn't worn off. Each time, my reaction has been the same. I think of the victims of sexual abuse. I think of the priests accused, the innocent and the guilty. I think of the Church. And I think about forgiveness.

The book of Genesis says that after Cain killed his brother Abel, God put an indelible mark on him to prevent him from being killed. It seems God either wanted Cain to suffer a long life of shame for his sin or have plenty of time to repent. Maybe it was both. The point is that God gave time to Cain for either to happen.



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Indelible marks of sorts have been left on the Church for what it did and didn't do to guard and protect children and young people from predator priests. Much has happened since the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued its Charter for the Protection of Children & Young People in 2002. Look at the websites of dioceses and religious orders across the country. The mark says *Virtus* or *Praesidium*. Departments for child and youth protection are everywhere, even in the Vatican. Standards and training sessions have been developed to teach

ethical ministry practices with minors. Notices posted in church vestibules say in bold, black letters, "Report Sexual Abuse." Criminal and civil suits abound. So do shame and repentance—as they should.

Does time heal all wounds? Maybe it's too soon to ask. There's something missing amidst the shame, repentance, diocesan departments, and survivor networks. It's the same thing I'll bet Cain longed for: forgiveness. How long did

Cain live in unforgiveness? Did he ever run home to Adam and Eve and tearfully beg their forgiveness? Did God forgive him? The Book of Genesis says only that time was given to Cain. Maybe that was the mark—that Cain couldn't be forgiven. But I like to think that, in time, he was.

Can the Church, that through the centuries forgave millions, ever be forgiven for its role in the sexual abuse of minors? What will it take? For how long will the clerical collar be a mark of shame and repentance? I remember a time not long ago when it was the mark of forgiveness.

There's still time for repentance and shame—and forgiveness. +

PRAYER

Risen Lord, your resurrection revealed to the world the hope and promise of new life. Help me to be a faithful, hopeful, loving presence to all people.

From Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

April 19-24

Monday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 6:8–15 / Jn 6:22–29

Tuesday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 7:51—8:1a / Jn 6:30–35

Wednesday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 8:1b–8 / Jn 6:35–40

Thursday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 8:26–40 / Jn 6:44–51

Friday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 9:1–20 / Jn 6:52–59

Saturday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 9:31–42 / Jn 6:60–69

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