

20200419 (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Easter)

Psalm 16; John 20:19-31

Peace and Scars

## INTROUDCTION

1 COVID-19 update: as of Wednesday night, Northwood nursing home had 59 cases

As of April 15, Northwood nursing home in Halifax has 38 residents and 21 staff who have tested positive for COVID-19.

Since my son had worked at the facility, we were afraid that he might be infected as well. Concerned of his health, my family gathered at the diner table to discuss about his job.

2 Resurrection update: as of Sunday evening, the disciples were afraid of the Jewish leaders

As of Sunday evening they were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Jesus was suddenly standing among his disciples.

His first word was "Peace be with you."

His first action was showing them the wounds in his hands and his side.

His word and action turned their fear to joy.

Theme: What kind words and actions do we need to change our fear to joy in the midst of COVID-19?

## BODY

1 Worry About the Future

1.1 My worry while waiting for the test result

I had been tested COVID-19 on Sunday March 29. The nurse in the assessment centre told me, "The result is usually available from 24 hours to 72 hours. Now the average waiting time is about 26 hours." I was waiting for the results with anxiety. It took almost 60 hours for me to be notified. (TGIN: Thank God it's NEGATIVE!) It was something I never want to experience again.

## 1.2 The disciples worry for their future

In the Easter morning the disciples saw the empty tomb and Mary Magdalene saw the risen Christ. Mary had told the disciples of her experience. However, they were still frightened concerning what might happen next. When they were discussing so intensely, Peter suggested that they should go back to fishing business in Galilee to avoid the further persecution (John 21:3). They were desperately searching for safety, protection, and peace.

## 2. Peace Be with You

### 2.1 Peace amid turmoil

There once was a king who was building a new palace and announced a painting contest. The king envisioned his kingdom as a peaceful land, so whoever's painting best symbolized peace would win a large cash prize.

The top painting portrayed a tall mountain cliff, rugged and strong. A few small trees grew out of the cracks of the face of the cliff. Above, dark ominous clouds loomed, and in the distance lightning flashed. Halfway up the cliff grew a small bush. In its branches, a bird sat in a nest apparently warming her eggs.

The king said, "Peace is not the absence of conflict. Peace is a state of mind. Those who experience peace have love in their hearts even when turmoil surrounds them."

### 2.2 Peace in the disciples' heart

"Peace be with you" (v.19) was a common Jewish greeting wishing well-being on the other person. But in this context it was far more than just a greeting. It was the peace that the disciples had with God, who had granted them the gift of grace through Jesus Christ. Christians who experience God's peace through Jesus Christ have love in their hearts even when turmoil surrounds them.

## 3. Resurrection and Scars

3.1 COVID-19 will leave scars, some visible, others not so much (Patricia Baker, The Sault Star, April 7, 2020)

COVID is like nothing we have encountered before in our lifetimes and it will leave its scars on humanity. Some of them will be visible ones, from feeling ill, or watching a loved one struggle. Others will be on the inside, emotional, mental and for those essential workers, first responders, health-care workers, very likely PTSD. The scars remind us of the great price that the front line workers have paid to save lives.

### 3.2 Showing the wounds

“As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side” (v. 20a).

On one hand, his wounds confirm his bodily resurrection.

On the other hand, his scars remind us of the great price that He paid to save us from our sins.

### CONCLUSION

“Keep safe!” That is the word I hear the most from my friends nowadays.

“Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge” (Ps 16:1). That is the prayer I use the most when I am going through this turmoil.

The risen Lord still carries the deep scars on his hands and feet to give us peace.

As the disciples of the risen Lord we share the words of peace and extend our love with one another from which may leave us scars.