

5 Easter A

May 7, 2023

St. Patrick

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Here in St. John's Gospel, Jesus gives his longest talk in the four Gospels. It's his "farewell discourse," just before going out to Gethsemane, where he's arrested by those who will put him to death. And Jesus reassures us, **"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me."**

Three weeks ago, it had been a full Sunday here. The eighth day of Easter we heard Jesus' appearance on that first Easter night. The first thing he did, after twice bestowing "Shalom," "Peace," on his disciples—well, the *first* thing Jesus did was show them his wounds in his hands and side.

It was about 10 p.m., and I was ready for bed. I took off my sweat pants—well, I tried to, as I've done so many times before. My right foot got tangled in the midsection of the sweat pants. I lost my balance, and I fell to the floor. I had never before broken a bone, but I knew that I had broken my left hip in the fall.

I lay there on the floor, and then I realized that I had left my I-Phone at the other end of the rectory. (As an aside, two years ago I preached to my two older sisters that they should get a medical alert system around their neck. It just didn't cross my mind that *I* might need it! I have it now.)

So I began the painful crawl—two to three inches at a push—I, sprawled on the floor. It took 75 minutes. At one point it came to me. We heard it in the Gospel on Palm Sunday. It said that Jesus, arriving at Gethsemane, **"threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father...let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want, but what you want."**

The word "humility" comes from the word "on the ground." Indeed, Jesus **"threw himself on the ground"** as he faced his suffering. Ten days earlier, on Good Friday, the liturgy instructs her ordained ministers to prostrate themselves on the ground at the start of that liturgy. That was ritual. A few days later, it was reality for me. Sprawled on the ground, I came face-to-face with my brokenness, my being in great need. **"My Father...let this cup pass from me,"** so I groaned. I cried out, knowing that I would be drinking that cup. Yes, I groaned, knowing I was wounded.

On our lovely Easter candle, prominent are the five large grains embedded into the candle in the sign of the cross. At the start of the Easter Vigil, as the priest places them into the candle, he prays this, **“By his holy and glorious wounds, may Christ our Lord guard us and keep us. Amen!”**

In his passion Jesus’ body had been battered, beaten, and unmercifully pinned to the wood of the cross. In his Easter victory, Friends, all these were wiped clean: smooth, beautiful and alive!

But those five wounds stayed—the nail marks in his hands and feet, and the slit opened in his side. And the church calls them his **“glorious wounds.”**

St. Patrick’s: we all have our wounds, don’t we? From injuries, or setbacks in life. From broken relationships, or unfulfilled dreams. They may be from tragedies, or perhaps the result of our mistakes, even sins.

We don’t like to stare at our wounds. And yet, it was the first thing Jesus showed his disciples on that first Easter night.

These fifty days, the Risen Jesus invites me—*us!*—to share with him our wounds, letting him anoint them with his balm of healing. I’ve marveled how Jesus enables us to be of service and support to others who suffer from similar wounds.

So Jesus tells us today, **“I am the way, the truth, and life.”**

This Sunday of Easter, take some time with Jesus and compare wounds (2)—his with yours. The Risen Jesus may even use our wounds to blossom in his Easter radiance. Remember—His wounds, too, blossomed, and *they* became glorious!

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(1) See Bishop Ken Untener, *The Little White Book*, Diocese of Saginaw, 2004, p. 9 (unnumbered)

*General Intercessions*

*May 7, 2023*

*5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter*

**Anchor us, the church, on the cornerstone of the Risen Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and our Life; we pray to you, O Lord—**

**Strengthen and bless Father Dexter Noblefranca, our new pastor, as he soon comes to minister with us at St. Patrick's; we pray to you, O Lord—**

**Help parents, teachers, guardians, and all who are entrusted with caring for children and adolescents; we pray to you, O Lord—**

**Prosper efforts toward peacemaking, and restore life in Ukraine, Syria, and the Sudan; we pray to you, O Lord—**

**Give healing and wholeness to those who suffer from depression, from illness, and from discrimination; we pray to you, O Lord—**

**Bring all who have died with hope into the joy of your kingdom, especially Pri Morden and Brad Winchester; we pray to you, O Lord—**