

2nd Sunday of Easter/ 2018

. *Sing me no song: read me no rhyme but don't waste my time, Show me.* You may recognize these lyrics from the musical My Fair Lady. Eliza Doolittle sings them to her suitor Freddie who can't help walking on the street where she lives. I suppose Thomas the apostle could have sung these same words to the other disciples in the upper room.

Unless I see him for myself, I will not believe. Show Me!

I wonder what Broadway would be without Revivals! How many revivals are there right now? Hello Dolly, Carousel, Angels in America, The Boys in the Band. There's something wonderful about Revivals. Revivals help us remember and connect experiences from the past, whether it be the "original" production, a summer stock or even a high school or college production. I imagine there are folks here who saw the original Broadway production of My Fair Lady with Julie Andrews and Rex Harrison. Anybody? I "almost" got to see Hello Dolly with Carol Channing when I was in high school but I gave away my ticket to an aunt visiting from Florida. What a good nephew! Revivals are about the past and the present. Something that "was" is "alive" again!

Sounds like Easter, doesn't it? Someone who "was", "is alive" again. In a very real sense Easter is the Ultimate Revival! Jesus of Nazareth who died on the cross is Alive again. That is the experience of the community of disciples gathered in the upper room. Jesus of Nazareth whose death on the cross they had witnessed was "with" them again. They recognized him as the one who had walked with them, shared meals with them, spoke to them with sometimes consoling, sometimes challenging words. He was the one in whom they had

hoped until those hopes and dreams were shattered with his death on the Cross. But then their broken hearts are revived. They are singing and dancing their joy. He is with them again. Their memories are flooded with his words, his actions. Yes, he is the same Jesus but somehow different. His resurrection from the dead is not simply a “revival”. It’s not just that he’s alive again. He’s alive and present and with them in a new way. And what is this “new” way?

We may glean some answer to that question looking at Chapter 20 of John’s Gospel. We just heard a section of it. Scripture scholar, Sandra Schneiders has a compelling interpretation of this Chapter in her article, Touching the Risen Jesus: in which she compares Mary Magdalene’s experience/ Do not touch me. And Thomas’ Touch me.

Both appearances are in the same chapter. In this brilliant scholarly article, Schneiders is making the distinction between the pre-Resurrection Jesus and the post-Resurrection Jesus. Mary Magdalene’s encounter signals the dramatic “newness” of the Risen One. Yes, he is the one whom she recognizes as “Rabbouni”, whose heart overflows at his presence but his physical presence, his flesh and blood self that she knew, was different. Her first instinct is to “touch” him to know that he is ‘real’ and not an illusion. That she is not just “seeing things” She was seeing him, yes, but in a way that she could never have imagined. And that is what compels her to be the first witness to say “ I have seen the Lord. He is Risen as he said”. If Mary misunderstands who this Risen Jesus is, Thomas the twin also misunderstands who this Risen Jesus is. And who is this Jesus? He is the one whose body is the community of disciples. Thomas will not believe the witness of the disciples. He doesn’t get it. His second chance is that Aha moment when he gets it. Oh now I

see! I don't have to physically touch you because I can see and know you in your body, the community of believers.

As Schneiders says "Mary Magdalene had to realize that the Church is the *body* of Christ (Jesus is not a corpse) and Thomas had to realize that the Church is the body of *Jesus* (not an unsatisfactory substitute for him).

AHA! Now I get it! At the beginning of today's liturgy I asked "Where did everybody go?" Why last week so many people and this week, well. Just us. I think Mary Magdalene and Thomas can "show" us. In different ways Mary and Thomas came to "see" that Jesus' Risen life was now in the community. Folks last week may have come to see a great "show". They showed up to hear about Jesus' Revival, his resurrection. They must have thought that this was just about Jesus when it's really all about them. It's all about us.

And that's why you Bacchus, Esther, Steven, Paul, Kelvin, Michelle are here today to receive the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. I think that each of you would say you've experienced a "revival" of your faith. You have each witnessed to the power of the community to mediate the real presence of Jesus Christ to you. That's why you've been here Sunday after Sunday, not just encountering Christ in the Eucharist but in your sharing your faith under Luz's guidance. Each of you are witnessing today to what Mary Magdalene and Thomas and the whole company of disciples "show" us. That Jesus Christ is with us and in us and God's spirit is always "reviving" us.