

We end the Easter season where we began: on the first day of the week. On Easter Sunday, St. John begins his account with those words: “On the first day of the week.” Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb and finds it empty. In the other Gospels she encounters an angel who explains the empty tomb, but St. John allows us to feel something else first: the tension of Easter faith.

Mary Magdalene does not begin with certainty. She begins with confusion. She runs to Peter and John and says, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb.” Her heart, already shattered by the crucifixion, fears that even the last visible reminder of Jesus has been taken away.

Peter and John run. They enter the empty tomb. They see the burial cloths are folded and arranged. And then the gospel says something about John that seems confusing: “He saw and believed... for he did not yet understand.” Not - he saw and understood, but rather, he saw and believed. Faith comes first, then understanding comes later. That is the tension of Easter faith.

The Resurrection did not instantly remove all uncertainty. The disciples did not walk out of the tomb with complete theological clarity and a neat explanation of what had happened. Instead, Easter begins with hearts that are pulled in two directions at once: fear, and yet - hope, confusion, and yet - trust, questions, and yet - belief.

That is great news for us. Because we might imagine that faith means certainty. That if I *really* believed, I would never doubt, never question, never fear. But the Easter stories tell us otherwise. John believed before he understood. Mary Magdalene encountered Jesus and at first thought he was the gardener. The disciples hid behind locked doors. Doubting Thomas needed to touch. Everyone arrives at understanding gradually. Everyone.

And that brings us to today. John tells us: “On the evening of that first day of the week...” Same day. Same Resurrection. But now the disciples are behind locked doors. The tomb is open. But their hearts are still closed. Jesus appears among them and says: “Peace be with you.” Notice what Jesus does not do. He does not say, “Why are you still afraid? Haven’t you figured this out yet?” Instead, Jesus meets them in the tension of Easter faith—the place where belief and fear still coexist—and he speaks into it: “Peace be with you.”

He breathes on them. “Receive the Holy Spirit.” The same breath that animated Adam in creation. The same Spirit that hovered over the waters at the dawn of time. The same Spirit that descended upon Jesus at His baptism. Now that divine breath enters fearful hearts—the Holy Spirit enters directly into the tension of Easter faith and gently opens what fear had closed.

Pentecost reveals something essential: The goal of Easter was never merely that the disciples believe that Jesus rose. The goal was that they become people who live differently *because* He

rose. The Holy Spirit enters into the tension of Easter faith and transforms fearful belief into courageous witness; faith matures into mission. That is exactly what we hear in the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles. The disciples who once hid behind locked doors now stand in public and proclaim the mighty works of God.

The Spirit enables them not simply to speak, but to proclaim. Luke tells us that they spoke in different tongues, but that the Spirit enabled them to declare with boldness the mighty works of God. Pentecost is not spiritual excitement. It is courage. It is witness. It is fearful hearts finding their voice. It is the transformation of fear into proclamation. It is the culmination, the resolution, of the tension of Easter faith: belief becomes conviction, and conviction becomes witness.

Where in my life am I still living behind locked doors? What fear keeps me silent? What part of my life still says: “I believe... but I do not yet understand.”

Today’s feast reminds us that the tension of Easter faith is not something that belonged only to Mary Magdalene, Peter, John, or the disciples in Jerusalem. It lives in us as well. We believe—but sometimes we still fear. We trust—but sometimes we still hesitate. We know Christ is risen—but sometimes we remain behind locked doors.

The good news is that Jesus does not wait until our faith is perfect. He enters locked rooms. He breathes his Spirit. He gives peace. He meets us in the tension. And slowly—sometimes quietly, sometimes dramatically—the Holy Spirit changes frightened disciples into joyful witnesses.

Today this truth becomes intensely personal for us—because today is our patronal feast day. We are Holy Spirit Catholic Church. The same Holy Spirit who entered that upper room is alive and active here, in this parish, at this time, in this place. The Spirit who transformed the tension of Easter faith in those disciples desires to transform ours as well. He desires to renew our hearts, deepen our faith, heal our wounds, awaken our gifts, strengthen our families, raise us up as disciples, and send us forth as witnesses.

The Easter season ends today. But Pentecost reminds us that the mission of Easter continues. Come, Holy Spirit. Open our hearts. Turn our belief into conviction, and our conviction into witness. Turn our faith into proclamation. And renew the face of the earth.