

3rd Sunday of Easter “B”
2018

When I first ordained – the first of Easters I felt like I had to prove the resurrection of Christ when I preached. I was pretty ignorant really. But being ignorant has never really bothered me – because my dad used to say, "We are all ignorant – just in different subjects". And that's true – I know some things but some things I don't. I can't prove the resurrection – I have no hard evidence. What we know and believe about the resurrection is based solely on the testimony of those who witnessed it.

And by their own testimony they didn't believe it at first. The way they tell the story – in order for Jesus to prove who he was he showed them his hands and his feet. He could have said, "look at my face" or "listen to my voice" but he didn't.

Hands and feet are not the first thing we notice about one another and yet they do tell a story. I think I still have a spot of lead in my left palm where this girl stabbed me with her pencil in 5th grade. I was pulling her hair or something and she turned around and stabbed me. There is a permanent indentation in one of the fingers of my right hand from writing so much. And I have a few scars from cuts and scrapes – one from a piece of glass – another from slicing meat for a K of C golf tourney. I could tell you the same stories about my feet – but I won't.

I love the Sherlock Holmes stories where some person is introduced to Holmes and he shakes their hand. When the person leaves the room he turns to Watson and tells him what the person does for a living – their income level and hobbies – all based on having shaken their hand. I could identify me of you by your hands – I think. I've had the privilege of putting the Body of Christ into them over a dozen years.

"Look at my hands and feet", Jesus said, and when they did – they would've seen the same hands that had reached out to touch people

that no one else dared to touch. They would have seen the same hands that blessed and broke bread and offered a cup of wine. They would have seen the same feet that had carried him hundreds of miles spreading the good news about God. They would also now have seen the holes in them. His hands and feet told the story of who he was and what he was about.

"You are witnesses to these things." That's what he told his disciples and then he entrusted the world to their care. The only proof of the resurrection that has ever been offered to the rest of us – outside the first disciples is this: the experience of knowing the forgiveness of God. That's what Jesus' hands and feet were always about – walking up to those who needed him – touching them with love and forgiveness. And that experience changes lives. It's that forgiveness that has changed you and changed me. That forgiving love that draws us to this church and this community.

Now Christ risen can still be recognized today by his hands and feet – but only when you and I walk with someone in need – and only when we touch others with the love that God has offered to us.

When the world looks around today for Jesus - it is us they look to. Not at our faces - but at our hands and feet – at what we do – who we touch and embrace – where we're willing to walk with the good news of forgiveness.

May our hands carry the embrace of Christ and our feet bring his hope to the world.

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