

First Sunday after Easter

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Date: 27 April 2025

Preacher: Fr. Randall Russell

[0 : 00] In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.! A glorified body.

So why in the world does a glorified body still have wounds? And the answer is, because those wounds are the marks of victory.

Fantastic signs that sin, death, and the devil have been defeated by our Lord's sacrifice upon the cross. For even on the first Sunday, Easter Sunday, we still can't get around the fact that Good Friday, Good Friday is still good.

That the cross is not something to be ignored or something to be overlooked, but something to be embraced. For it is through sacrifice, the denial of ourselves as well as God's grace, that our own glorification is achieved.

For it would be wrong for any of us to think that Easter is a time when we should all just forget about Good Friday. Forget about the cross.

[1 : 44] Forget about the wounds of our crucified and risen Lord. For it is those very same wounds that continue to give us peace.

Peace be to you is what our Lord told his disciples in this morning's gospel as he showed them his hands and his side.

For the disciples were not looking upon some bodiless spirit, but upon the flesh and blood, crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ.

For the tomb was empty. But there he stood in their midst, showing his disciples his wounds and breathing his life giving breath upon them.

Therefore, shame on anyone who celebrates Easter, but who forgets the cross, who acts as if salvation is all a matter of bodiless spirits floating around in heaven, but who fails to see all that Christ did to redeem the physical world.

[3 : 11] For on that first Easter Sunday, Jesus did not tell the apostles, if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them because he wanted to give us all a one way ticket to heaven.

No. Our Lord told the apostles, if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them because he wanted for his apostles, as well as for his entire church, as well as for us to continue to make an impact here on earth.

For God loves the world and not just heaven. And God cares for our bodies and not just our souls. For it is high time for all the people of God, both Catholic and Protestant alike, to repent of every Gnostic heresy and to embrace the truth of our Lord's bodily resurrection, starting with the wounds of our crucified and risen Lord.

So as St. Paul said, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men.

[4 : 44] And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself. He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

For the glorified body of the resurrected Christ still bears the marks of his crucifixion. Physical marks that speak of God's infinite love for our physical world.

For our greatest hope as Christians, again, is not, it is not to spend eternity as a bunch of bodiless spirits floating around in the clouds of heaven forever.

No, our greatest hope is, as we just confessed in the Nicene Creed, the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

For ultimately, our greatest hope as Christians is that when Christ returns to judge both the living and the dead, there will be a new heaven and a new earth, which is both physical as well as spiritual.

[6 : 03] For both heaven and earth shall become one upon the return of he who is himself one, fully man and fully God, our dear Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

It is all united in him, heaven and earth, flesh and blood, soul, mind, body and spirit. Therefore, may we never give anyone the impression that all God cares about is their souls, while neglecting the things that pertain to the earth as well as their earthly bodies.

For that certainly is not what Jesus did, and neither should we. For God's love for the world is made manifest in his own body, seen both in the marks of his own crucifixion and death, as well as in the lives of all those who are members of that same body, Christ's holy church on earth as it is in heaven.

Therefore, Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia. And that means that all those who have died in Christ will one day bodily rise as well.

For matter matters. And our God really does love the world. As this morning we hear, how our Lord showed his apostles the living marks of his victory.

[7 : 41] In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.