

***Bishop Jodoin's Homely for
2nd Easter Sunday - April 19, 2020
In the Saint-Pierre-au-Liens church in Caraquet
(Broadcasted on the radio at 94,1 fm CKLE CJVA
and Live on the Diocese of Bathurst Facebook page)***

On the first day of the week for the Jews, on the evening of his resurrection, Christ appeared very simply, almost naturally in the midst of his apostles, saying to them: "Peace be with you!" He didn't say, "Here I am or I have conquered death or I am happy to see you again" No, he said to them, "Peace be with you!" "This is the most important message he wanted to convey to them!

But what is this peace that Christ wanted so much to give them, because it is a gift that he gave them. This peace is not peace that settles conflicts or disputes between us (a peace that is horizontal). Nor is it inner peace, in our hearts to dispel our fears and fears. No! The peace that Christ wants to give them is a vertical peace, an upwards peace. A peace between God and us, that is to say the grace of being in full communion with God his Father, a God who loves us deeply, a God in whom we can put all our confidence because he is always there with us in our moments of joy and in our trials, our sufferings, our failures and our mourning. A God we can always count on. Saint Teresa of Avila said "Let nothing trouble you, nothing terrify you ... for he who has God lacks nothing. God alone is enough." Christ gives us this peace: to be in communion with his Father.

This peace was announced to us at Christmas, at the birth of Christ: the Jewish people awaited a Messiah who would be Prince of Peace; the angels in heaven sang to the shepherds: "Glory to God in the highest heavens and peace on earth to the men He loves." During his public life, Jesus announced this peace: among others, to the woman who was losing her blood and who had touched him to be healed, and to another woman who had poured perfume on his feet. He said to them, "Go in peace, your faith saved you ... because you are now in communion with God". Jesus had also sent his disciples, two by two, on a mission to villages, saying to them: "Go to these houses and bring them peace ..."

"This peace that he has left us, this peace that he has given us", we receive it at each of our Eucharist when the priest says "Peace be with you", that is to say have the peace of God, let yourself be loved by Him, be in communion with Him, trust him completely!

When he appeared to his apostles with his bruised and wounded body, with his side, his hands and his feet pierced, they clearly saw that he was indeed the one they had known and loved: the one who had instructed, the one who had worked miracles, their master in whom they had put all their trust. They saw him dead on a cross. They now see him alive before them. They were finally right to trust him, to have bet everything on Him.

For the risen Christ is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world and who gives us peace. Dying on a cross for love, having shed his blood like the Paschal lamb, He conquered death, evil and sin, everything that prevented us from being in communion with God his Father.

Then, Christ made a gesture in their midst: he sent them the Holy Spirit, the very Spirit of God, a Spirit of Love, so that we now can nourish our relationship with Him, offer the world this peace of God and fight everything that still hinders our communion with God, that is to say our sins. This is a gesture of forgiveness, of mercy for us.

During this first appearance of Christ, Thomas was not there. You could say he missed Mass! I like this apostle, Thomas, who looks like us. He was deeply attached to Jesus. He wanted to follow him even at the risk of his life. However, he was deeply disappointed with the turn of events, disappointed with the death of Jesus. He had put so much hope in Him. Now everything was falling apart. His grief was too great. He wanted to isolate himself from others in order to live his grief alone. You know, everyone experiences mourning differently. Some need to be surrounded, others to be alone. Thomas chose to be alone. But when he heard his friends tell him what had happened the previous Sunday, he didn't want to miss anything because he loved Jesus deeply and what he heard was too good to be true. Being a frank and honest person, he said what he thought. He did not want to pretend to believe. He wanted evidence. He did not want to be disappointed again and be in more pain. Well, the following Sunday, he was there.

So, when He appeared among his disciples, what did Christ do? He spoke first, directly to Thomas. True to himself, Christ left aside the other 10 apostles to go to the lost sheep, Thomas, the one who now most needed Him (which Christ continues to do with us). Before the bruised Christ, Thomas said, "My Lord and my God". He did not say, "You really are the Son of God, the Lord". No, he said "My" Lord and "My" God ... The "My" is very important because it showed that Thomas believed! He does not have to touch the wounds. Christ is truly Lord and God in his life and in his heart. He has a life experience, a relationship of faith with Him that touches everything, that changes his existence. Because Faith is not to find a truth based on evidence (that is

not faith, it is a finding). Faith is to feel loved by Christ, to have a loving relationship with Him and to trust Him completely.

Like Thomas, we too "believe" in Him. He is the one who came among us 2000 years ago to bring us the peace of God, to put us in contact with his Father. We can trust him. It is the most precious thing in life.

At our Baptism and at our Confirmation, we received the Spirit of God that now makes us witnesses of His living and active presence in our world. A Spirit who sends us outward to announce the Peace of God given to us. A Spirit that calls us to be peacemakers with our brothers and sisters and a Spirit that produces many fruits within us, including that of joy and peace ... another peace... an inner peace that dispel our worries and fears.

At the end of our celebration this morning, we will be ready to hear these words: "Go in the peace of the Lord!" That is, "Abide in this peace of God given by Christ from the beginning of the Church." A peace that will keep us going all week. And next Sunday, we will again unite as brothers and sisters, not wanting to miss the risen Christ for anything in the world. He will be there among us, for us and with us.
Amen