

peace be with you

weekly devotional

from the desk of Rev. Marta Wheeler

SAINT PAUL BENSON

April 20, 2022

EASTER IN STYLE

On Easter Sunday morning
some pastors dance in the aisles.
The "Flying Pastor" makes a grand
entrance on a zip line into the
sanctuary as the star of the show.

Yet nothing we do competes
With the feat of Jesus on his
resurrection day, transforming
from death to new life when everything
seemed most hopeless and frightening!

No matter how many ways
we do not bless God in attempts
to harm one another and Mother
Earth herself, we learn once again that
transformation is entirely possible!

Have you seen it in your life?
When the darkness is overwhelming
and gradually, or all at once in
an unexpected moment in time,
new life makes you smile broadly again!

Our celebration during
the Easter Season need not
include acrobatics or an overstuffed
Easter basket holding cheap chocolate
yet dancing and singing may be called for.

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John 20: 19-31

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

¹⁹ It was still the first day of the week. That evening, while the disciples were behind closed doors because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities, Jesus came and stood among them. He said, "Peace be with you."

²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. When the disciples saw the Lord, they were filled with joy. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I am sending you." ²² Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you don't forgive them, they aren't forgiven."

Jesus Appears to Thomas and the Disciples

²⁴ Thomas, the one called Didymus, ^[a] one of the Twelve, wasn't with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ The other disciples told him, "We've seen the Lord!"

²⁶ After eight days his disciples were again in a house and Thomas was with them.

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EASTER IN STYLE

Continued

We celebrate Easter each time we give thanks for the possibilities that each day holds and breathe in the breath of forgiveness that brings hope.

First Week of Easter Blessings to you!

Experiencing the Presence of the Risen Christ

It is often the simple things in life that soften our hearts and help us know that God is with us always. We no longer have the man Jesus walking among us, but the Spirit of the Living Christ will be with us always.

Christ's healing power may be experienced by the act of someone prayerfully placing their hand on your hand. We can feel more special when presented with the gift of a personal artistic creation or a homemade treat.

Perhaps you remember a time that you recognized Christ as the Risen Savior in the actions of those who lighten your burdens and help preserve your dignity.

Last week the choir and youth presented the Good Friday service. Amongst the youth were those who read for the congregation with confidence for the first time. You could hear the emotion in their voices as they read poetry and prayers that portrayed the final moments in the life of Jesus. How could the One who came to help us comprehend the love of our Creator be crucified on a cross?

After Easter, some still have trouble

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John 20: 19-31

Continued

Even though the doors were locked, Jesus entered and stood among them. He said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here. Look at my hands. Put your hand into my side. No more disbelief. Believe!"

²⁸ Thomas responded to Jesus, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹ Jesus replied, "Do you believe because you see me? Happy are those who don't see and yet believe."

³⁰ Then Jesus did many other miraculous signs in his disciples' presence, signs that aren't recorded in this scroll. ³¹ But these things are written so that you will believe that Jesus is the Christ, God's Son, and that believing, you will have life in his name.

believing that Jesus was the Son of God and that he overcame death. To this Jesus compassionately says, "*No more disbelief. Believe!*"

In this present moment, know that our God sees you as worthy and loves you beyond measure.

Happy Easter Week to you from the pastors and people of Saint Paul!

Marta

Rev. Marta Wheeler