



Bringing Home the Word

Second Sunday of Easter / Sunday of Divine Mercy
April 12, 2015

Speaking About Wounds and Scars By Janel Esker

I was the “jock” in my family growing up. I remember being very proud of the scrapes, scratches, and particularly colorful bruises I gained from tumbles and falls while playing sports. Sometimes my teammates and I would compare wounds to see whose was the ugliest...and hence, the coolest!

For children, scars and wounds can be something to show off, while adults tend to hide their stretch marks, surgical scars, and bruised skin—often, I think,

Sunday Readings

Acts of the Apostles 4:32–35

With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. They distributed all goods according to need.

1 John 5:1–6

We know we love each other when we love God and obey his commandments. The Spirit is the one that testifies and the Spirit is truth.

John 20:19–31

Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them and whose sins you retain are retained. Peace be with you. Do not be unbelieving, but believe. Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.

to appear strong and less vulnerable. We wouldn't want to appear weak or broken, would we?

However, in today's Gospel reading, one of the first things Jesus does upon appearing to the disciples after his resurrection is show them the wounds in his hands and his side. This, of course, was a way to prove he was really Jesus—the one they saw crucified just three days earlier. But it's significant that even in his glorified, risen body, Jesus still had his wounds. They didn't magically disappear. He didn't try to hide them. They were part of him, even in his new, resurrected life.

Only a week after the joy of Easter, it may seem strange to speak about wounds and scars. Yet we know well in our own lives that while we trust in the joy of the resurrection, we still live with broken hearts, broken relationships, and wounded souls. Just because Easter has occurred doesn't mean our wounds have been erased.

But today's Gospel reminds us that we have a Savior who knows what it's like to be hurt, afraid, and broken. He knows our wounds because he still has his. Because of this, he accompanies us... all the way through the cross to new, resurrected life. †

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

ONE? TWO? REFLECTION

- How often do my actions match my words?
- How do I approach people throughout the day?

PRAYER

Risen Lord, you
fulfilled your promise
by rising from the
dead. Help me to
practice what I
preach.

Christian “Hopital(ity)”: The Founding of Hospitals Came From the Early Church

By Michael Prendergast

The word hospital comes from the Latin word *hospes*, meaning “a guest.” Christ inspired the early Christian community to embrace the sick and dying.

In the Letter of James, we read, “Is anyone among you sick? He should summon the presbyters of the church, and they should pray over him and anoint [him] with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful” (5:14–16).

In the Roman world, a place where the male head of the family had power over those under his roof, the chronically ill were abandoned—Tiber Island was the place where sick or elderly slaves would die. Ill infants would be left to die of exposure. But when Christ encountered the sick, he was concerned with their physical healing as well as their spiritual healing.



From Jesus’s healing ministry and the belief that all are made in God’s image and likeness grew Christians’ inspiration to offer care to believers and nonbelievers alike (see Romans 12:13, Hebrews 13:2, 1 Peter 4:9, and 3 John). In the first and second centuries, bishops and presbyters, but mostly deacons, visited and cared for the poor and the sick in their homes. The resources to cover these expenses came from donations by the community. Thus, there was joined the need to care for the ill using the resources of the community. Through the ages, the Church took the lead in establishing hospitals, orphanages, and places of refuge for the poor. Although we find examples of institutions that cared for the sick, the first hospitals in the Christian world were established following the First Council of Nicaea in the year 325.

Some were built by St. Basil the Great (died c. 379), who refused to allow any distinction between Jews and Christians. The physician St. Samson the Hospitable (died c. 530) opened his home as a free clinic. Charlemagne (742–814) ordered that hospitals be attached to each cathedral and monastery.

Both the hospitaller (looking after guests) and the infirmarer (caring for the sick) were among the rank of monks in monasteries. The famous Benedictine Abbey of Cluny, founded in 910, set the example for other monasteries, which were meant to become centers for the relief of suffering for all who came to their doors.

Toward the end of the ninth century, religious orders were founded with the intent of ministering to the sick by building and staffing hospitals. By the sixteenth century, hospitals were placed under the control of the local bishop in Italy, but in France and elsewhere hospitals were passed into the hands of the sovereigns. The communities founded by St. Vincent de Paul, including the Sisters of Charity, took the lead in caring for the sick and the poor.

Since 1915 the Catholic Health Association of the United States has raised its passionate voice advocating justice and compassionate care for people of all ages, faiths, and backgrounds from conception to natural death. Catholic hospitals in the United States seek to achieve a vision inspired by biblical justice and informed by the Church’s social and sacramental tradition.

WEEKDAY READINGS April 13–18

Mon.	Easter Weekday (St. Martin I, Pope and Martyr), Acts 4:23–31 / John 3:1–8	Thurs.	Easter Weekday, Acts 5:27–33 / John 3:31–36
Tues.	Easter Weekday, Acts 4:32–37 / John 3:7b–15	Fri.	Easter Weekday, Acts 5:34–42 / John 6:1–15
Wed.	Easter Weekday, Acts 5:17–26 / John 3:16–21	Sat.	Easter Weekday, Acts 6:1–7 / John 6:16–21