

## Pentecost Sunday, C

**My Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

Jesus **“showed them his hands and his side.”**

That doesn't sound a lot like Pentecost. When we think of Pentecost, we usually think of the rush of a violent wind, divided tongues of fire, speaking in other languages, and being intoxicated by the Spirit. That's how Luke describes it. But John's account of Pentecost talks about locked doors, fear, wounds, peace, a shared breath, and being sent.

In John's gospel, Pentecost is quieter and more intimate. It is Easter evening, and the disciples are afraid. They are hiding behind locked doors. Jesus came and stood among them. **“Peace be with you,”** he said. Then he showed them his wounds from the crucifixion—his hands and his side.

I wonder why Jesus did that. I wonder what he wanted them—what he wanted us—to see.

I think there is more to be seen than just the mark of the nails and the piercing of the sword. It is about more than simply being able to identify Jesus as the one who was crucified. In showing us his wounds, Jesus is identifying with every person who has ever been or is wounded. I think the open wounds of Jesus hold the pain of the world.

And as the poet Warsan Shire writes in her poem, **“What They Did Yesterday Afternoon,”** that pain is everywhere:

**“Later that night**

**I held an atlas in my lap**

**ran my fingers across the whole world  
and whispered  
where does it hurt?  
it answered  
everywhere  
everywhere  
everywhere.”**

The wounded body of Jesus is an emblem of our wounded world. To look at Jesus' hands and his side is to see the wounds we have received and the ones we have inflicted on others.

And I wonder what that brings up for you. What hurts your heart today? What are the tender spots of your life? What is festering deep inside that you don't want anyone to see? Where do you see another hurting? Can you hold their gaze, or do you look away because you just don't want to see? In what ways have you and I added to the pain of another?

The daily news breaks my heart. I see fear. I see death. I see protests. I see anger. I see violence. I see prejudice and racism. I see arrogance. I see privilege. I see unemployment. I see poverty and economic hardship. Those are the open wounds of our country, and we are bleeding.

America is in a hard place, and we have been for quite a while. We are not **“all together in one place”** on this day of Pentecost. Our country is divided, fragmented, and wounded. And so is my heart. Maybe yours is too. It is not easy to talk about our wounds, whether our individual or

national wounds, the wounds we have received or the ones we have inflicted. Talking about our wounds requires us to look at what we have done and left undone. It means we each must look within ourselves. It means taking responsibility for our lives. It means valuing the life and wounds of another as much as our own.

We might need to confess and forgive. We might need to reach out to another and open ourselves to another's reaching toward us. We might need to offer the ointment of healing to another and receive another's ointment for our healing.

I know all that in my head, and it makes sense. But most of the time, I don't want to face or deal with my wounds. It is too painful. It is a vulnerable and risky place to be. And maybe you feel like that too. More often than not, I want to deny that they hurt. I want to ignore or forget my wounds, relegate them to the past. I want to cover up and hide my wounds so you cannot see them. Sometimes I make judgments about and blame others. Other times, I want to use my wounds, revel in them, and play the victim so I can get some attention or sympathy. And maybe worst of all is when I use them as a justification for hurting someone else.

But Jesus doesn't do any of those things. Instead, he shows up behind the locked doors, stands among the disciples amid their fear, and says, **"Peace be with you."** Then he shows them his hands and his side, his wounds, and then he says again, **"Peace be with you."**

Jesus' wounds sit in the middle of the peace he offers. Peace bookends both sides of his wounds. And what if that's true for us? What if we all live with a wounded peace? What if the only real peace we can offer comes from the wounds we have suffered?

**“Peace be with you,”** Jesus says. What does that mean when you are afraid and have locked the doors of your house, heart, and life?

“Peace be with you,” Jesus says. What does that mean for you and me today? What is this peace Jesus offers? What does it look like, feel like?

I don't have many answers to the questions I have asked. We must figure out how to be peaceful in this country. I cannot tell you how to do that, but I can tell you this: The peace Jesus offers doesn't mean serenity or a lack of conflict. And it doesn't mean that we necessarily get our way. I think it is more than peace, an agreement to disagree, or the resignation to go along to get along.

The peace Jesus offers changes hearts, sends people into the world, heals lives, and lets all people breathe. The peace Jesus offers will be found next to our wounds. It is a wounded peace.

**My Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

**“Peace be with you,”** Jesus says.

What will you do with your wounded peace today? To whom will you offer it? And how will you let it make a difference in the life of another?

**Amen.**