

## **GOSPEL MESSAGE**

**April 11, 2021**

### **SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER**

#### **From Fear to Freedom**

The disciples had good reason to be afraid. Their teacher, perceived as a threat to social, political, and religious order, had just been crucified; now with rumors swirling about his mysterious resurrection, it wasn't clear if Jesus' followers would face the same dire fate on a cross. Today, most of us, fortunately, can live without fear regarding when and where we are able to worship. At the same time, when we take a moment to look at the world around us, it doesn't take long to notice what a strong influence fear has on our lives.

Fear not of things like tornadoes or spiders or bats, but rather fear of things that keep our hearts closed off from others and God and that keep our truest selves locked up inside. As it was for the disciples in today's reading, our unaddressed fears can get in the way of our recognizing what Jesus is doing in our midst. They turn us in toward ourselves rather than outward toward those who could be blessed by our gifts and who need our care and love. They keep us from growing in our relationship with God and as the people God has created us to be.

Although it can be scary to acknowledge our fear of being inadequate or of losing control or of being alone, or whatever our deepest fear may be, when we do, that's when something powerful can happen. A sense of peace and joy is never far away. Not only are we released from our fear, but giving voice to our fears can set others free from theirs as well.

When Jesus appeared to those first disciples locked together behind closed doors, he came offering peace, and he breathed on them the Holy Spirit. In that moment their lives were changed—forever, and for good. The same is true for us when we dare to surrender our fears to God and embrace God's future for us with courage.

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