

## **The Faith that Offers Hope and Peace**

(Reflection on John 20:19-23)

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The disciples were gathered behind closed doors because they were afraid. Perhaps some of them were more afraid than others, but they all sheltered, nevertheless. None of them could go beyond their fear. They believed locked doors would protect them, but no lock can shut out fear.

Of course, it is easy to understand why they were troubled and afraid. The disciples believed they had lost the Promised One, whom they had loved and served and for whom they had abandoned everything. They huddled and despaired. Gone were heady days of healing, teaching, and driving out demons. What they did not understand was that their loss was not the death of Jesus. They had lost their faith, no longer remembering or believing in the power of Jesus' love or the eternal lives which they had been promised and which they could never lose.

They found no comfort in each other, shut away from the world that only wanted to hurt them. But at that moment, without announcement or fanfare, Jesus came to them. His greeting, "peace be with you," rekindled their faith with the realization that they had not lost their Lord after all. He had always been with them and now, by repeating softly "peace be with you," He reassured them that He would never abandon them. He breathed upon them the gift of the Holy Spirit. This source of all strength came in a single breath of love, teaching them to seek His presence in quiet, simple acts of love rather than miraculous acts of power.

Easter was the day the Lord was raised from the dead and also the day the disciples' faith was resurrected. This is God's love and example; neither suffering nor death are defeat or cause for despair. The Lord's constant presence in our lives shows us that nothing defeats love, that love without limits is more powerful than even death. In this we place our confidence. The Lord's love for us is without limits. Love, the author of all, the cause for all, and the meaning of all is Jesus.

During these troubling times of social distancing and huddling behind locked doors, when we can so easily give in to fear and distress, we rely on the love of Jesus, which is without limits as attested by his Resurrection. His Love is the foundation of our faith, which gives us hope and offers us peace.

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