

April 27, 2014
Second Sunday of Easter

All Saints Church, Syracuse, NY
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My dear Brothers and Sisters. Faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit. We do not make our faith; it is given to us as a gift. And it is given freely and readily. So readily that asking for it is already an act of faith. This gift changes us deeply. It is like being first spiritually blind, and then our blindness is taken away, our eyes of faith are opened, and we can see and we can embrace God's presence in our lives.

Mary Magdalene was at the tomb of Jesus crying. The body of Jesus was not there. Jesus was standing right there close to her, but she did not recognize him. She thought that he was the gardener. She did not recognize him until Jesus called her by her name: "Mary". Then her eyes were opened and she recognized Jesus.

After Jesus' death and burial, two of his disciples were going to Emmaus, a small village near Jerusalem. Their hope, what Jesus meant to them, was shattered. As they were discussing the events of the last few days Jesus joined them, but they did not recognize him until in their home, at the table, Jesus took the bread, broke it and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him. And Jesus vanished from their sight.

My Sisters and Brothers. We live in a physical world that does not seem to leave much room for the real vision of faith. Just as the apostle Thomas said in the Gospel we just heard today: Unless I see the nail-marks in his hands and feet, and I put my hand into his side I do not believe. All my life I have been involved in both, science and scriptural theology. After 85 years of this, I came to the conclusion that instead of hostility and exclusion, science gives realism to my faith, and faith gives true meaning to my science. One cannot be without the other. Just as the seed is not the flower, and the flower is not the seed, but the seed gives realism to the flower, and the flower gives meaning to the seed. One cannot be without the other. The past is not the present or the future but they cannot be without each other. That is why the second Vatican Council opened the windows of the Church to the present days. God's love and mercy is an ever unfolding mystery.

My Sisters and Brothers: Blessed are those who did not see and yet believe. We recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread.

Amen.