



**Grace and peace to you.
Our Message today is from St. John 20:19–23.**

It is the evening of Easter Day. The tomb is empty, but the disciples are not celebrating. They are hiding behind locked doors because they are afraid. Fear has closed them in.

Then Scripture says, “Jesus came and stood among them.”

Not after they became brave.
Not after they understood everything.
Not after their faith became strong.
Not after the doors were unlocked.

Jesus comes while the doors are still locked.

This is good news for us, because many of us know what it is like to live behind locked doors. We hide behind grief, disappointment, guilt, anxiety, anger, and exhaustion. We may look fine on the outside, while inwardly we are afraid.

But the risen Christ does not wait for us to fix ourselves before coming near. He meets us exactly where we are and says, “Peace be with you.”

His first words are not words of rebuke. He does not ask, “Where were you?” or “Why did you abandon me?” Instead, he speaks peace.

This is more than a greeting. It is resurrection peace—the peace of God that overcomes sin, shame, fear, and even death itself. Jesus speaks peace into fearful hearts.

This reminds us of Jesus’ words in Matthew 11:28:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

The risen Christ comes to weary people and offers rest for their souls.

Then John tells us that Jesus showed the disciples his hands and his side. The risen Christ still bears the wounds of the crucifixion. Resurrection did not erase the scars. But those wounds are no longer signs of defeat. They have become signs of victorious love.

This matters because many people think their wounds make them unworthy of serving God. But Jesus shows us something different: healed wounds can become places where God’s grace shines most clearly.

In Luke 24:36, Jesus again says:

“Peace be with you.”

The same peace spoken in that upper room is still spoken to the church today. Christ still meets fearful people with divine peace.

Continued on the back

Then Jesus says, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

This is astonishing. The frightened disciples are now being sent into the world.

Notice the order: first comes peace, then comes mission. Jesus does not say, "Prove yourselves worthy." He gives grace before he gives responsibility.

The church is not built on human confidence or ability. It is built on the presence of the risen Christ.

Then Jesus breathes on them and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

This takes us back to Genesis, when God breathed life into Adam. Now the risen Jesus breathes new life into his disciples. Easter is not only about life after death; it is about new life beginning now.

The Holy Spirit empowers the disciples for one important calling: forgiveness.

"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven."

In a world filled with revenge, resentment, and division, the church is called to be a community of reconciliation. Christians are meant to be people through whom forgiveness enters the world.

Jesus had already taught this in Matthew 5:9:

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

The risen Christ now sends his followers to become peacemakers in a wounded world.

This does not mean pretending evil is harmless. It means refusing to let sin and hatred have the final word. The cross and resurrection declare that mercy is stronger than condemnation.

As disciples of Jesus, we are sent to share the peace we ourselves have received. We are called to move beyond our comfort zones, to reach out to hurting people, and to offer hope and encouragement in times of fear.

So what does this Gospel say to us today?

It says that Christ still enters locked rooms.

He still speaks peace to fearful hearts.

He still breathes the Holy Spirit into weary people.

And he still sends ordinary disciples like you and me into the world carrying forgiveness, hope, and resurrection life.

Maybe today you feel more like frightened disciples than triumphant saints. If so, this Gospel is for you.

The risen Jesus comes not to shame you, but to stand among you.

And his word to you today is the same:

"Peace be with you." Amen.

Vicar Lotegeluaki