

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily  
Sunday, April 24, 2022  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter  
Cycle C

According to Pope Francis, among the most striking experiences of the past few decades is the experience of encountering locked doors. This is due to the growing sense of insecurity of people. Insecurity is what forces people to close and lock their doors – literally and figuratively. The “closed door” is really a symbol of our modern life. It is more than a simple sociological fact. It is an existential reality that has imposed itself as a way of life.

“Closed door” has become a way of confronting reality, standing up to people, and facing the future. We can become so insecure and fearful that we just close our doors to others. Today’s gospel passage talks about the disciples “hiding behind locked doors.” We can say why: They are afraid and ashamed of how they treated Jesus. They failed to understand him; they denied him; they abandoned him in his hour of need; and they even betrayed him.

But Jesus puts them at ease with his greeting of love and forgiveness: “Peace be with you.” The risen Lord comes to unlock the doors of their fear and shame. And he comes to enter their hearts with the gifts of his peace, forgiveness and reconciliation. Jesus is not concerned about getting through the physically locked doors where the disciples are hiding. The risen Lord is more concerned about getting through the locked doors of their hearts! He desperately wants them to believe in him...to believe in his resurrection and new life...to believe in his mercy, forgiveness and love.

The term “locked door” is a great theological and spiritual symbol. “Hiding behind locked door” is descriptive of what happens when we sin and when we are not in the presence of the Lord.

When we sin, we lock ourselves in, we become slaves of our egos, of our own wants and desires, of our own concerns and interests.

Locked in... bounded... enslaved... isolated...removed from things and reality. This is the description of a sinful, frightened soul. When I sin, I am locked in around myself in fear, and I see the world around me as a threat.

Today's gospel invites us to ask ourselves: "What are the locked doors in our hearts that need to be opened?" Needless to say, that we need to open those doors, so that the risen Lord may enter. It may be the door locked by selfishness and self-centeredness, which prevents us from seeing the risen Lord in others and from responding to their needs as we should. It may be the door locked by anger, resentment and bitterness, which hinders us to move on from a painful past and deprives us of peace, healing and reconciliation. It may be the door locked by worries, fears and anxieties, which betrays our unbelief in the risen Lord and our lack of trust in the divine providence. It may be the door locked by prejudice and discrimination, behind which we put all the people we do not like – we do not want them around, we do not need them.

Easter is not just about the opening of the empty tomb of the risen Lord. Easter is also about opening our closed doors. We are to open them so that the risen Lord can come in to our life and transform us – as he once transformed the fearful disciples. This is the work of amazing grace. This is the work of God's mercy and love. This is the power of Christ's Resurrection.

Amen