

Dear Members of Sacred Heart Parish,

I look with wonder at the many changes and transformations in today's Gospel in the disciples because of the presence of the Risen Lord. It begins: "But they were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost." Jesus responds: "Why are you troubled? And why do questions arise in your hearts?" Most importantly to Jesus, he needed to tend to their hearts first and the troubles and questions that they held. Once their hearts embraced joy and amazement, once their hearts were healed and whole, He could then turn His attention to their minds, to open them to understand the Scriptures: "that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled." Finally, with hearts knowing peace and minds knowing truth, He could send them forth as His witnesses.

So often, when we are seeking understanding or direction, we turn to another whose opinion we respect and ask, "What do you think?" or "What is your thought on this?" But for the most important questions or the most perplexing troubles, Jesus ask: "What is in your heart?" How do you feel?" He does not proceed with enlightening their minds until he has first aligned their hearts with His Love. Questions that arise in our hearts cannot be resolved with answers that are formed in the mind. The questions that trouble the heart can only have peace when we come into the presence of our Lord, for as St. Augustine wrote so long ago: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."

As it appears that we are returning to some sort of normalcy, it seems that our brains are filled to the brim with ideas and possibilities, our minds are already teeming with projects and plans, but what about our hearts? Are they still restless and troubled? Are our relationships and friendships still frayed and in need of mending? Let our hearts first be healed with His peace and filled with His grace. Then, let our minds be opened to giving witness to what our hearts already experience:

"Alleluia! Love is alive; The Son has arisen for all."

This week, let us find our rest in Him,

*Father John*