

I don't thank you enough for the food you contribute when we collect for our pantries. When you think about widespread hunger and poverty, your gift may seem hopelessly small, but it does feed someone and it feeds them spiritually to know that people care. So, thank you. In today's gospel, Jesus offers a gift to his disciples that may have seemed hopelessly inadequate, but it gave them the confidence they lacked.

This story takes place on Easter night after two disciples had met a stranger on the road to Emmaus and recognized him as Jesus when he broke bread. Jesus then disappeared and the two ran back to Jerusalem. They burst into the place where the others had gathered only to hear the news that Jesus had also appeared to Peter. Then as they are excitedly telling these stories to one another, Jesus appears again to the whole group. "Peace," he says to them. Then, from the sublime to the ridiculous, he asks for a midnight snack--like Santa Claus. At the Last Supper we heard Jesus say, "I will not eat the Passover again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Now, on Easter Sunday, he eats again. The Last Supper wasn't so last after all. In the Acts of the Apostles, when Peter remembered these days in a passage we hear every Easter Sunday, he said, "God raised Jesus on the third day and allowed him to appear to us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead." When Jesus wished them peace and accepted their food, he modeled the rules he talked about when he first sent this group into discipleship: "Whatever house you enter,"--do you remember this? He told them, "First say, 'Peace to this house!' Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide."

This final appearance of Jesus in Luke's Gospel sends the group into discipleship again. "Repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed," Jesus says, "to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."

So, what's the hopelessly inadequate gift Jesus gives these people? They're startled, terrified, doubtful, and unskilled. They've also been told their mission is to the world. So to give them confidence, Jesus offers this gift: He says, "Look at my hands and my feet." Wounded, broken, crippled hands and feet, good for nothing after a crucifixion. Like giving a single can of soup to feed a hungry world, Jesus offers these disabled limbs to proclaim the gospel, and it dispels their doubt.

Doubts and fears haunt us at every turn. Families wonder what to do with the kids. Our parish wonders how to pay our bills. The elderly wonder how to live with poor health. We find reassurance in our brokenness. When we stop relying on ourselves and turn to one another we discover the risen body of Christ.