

## MODERN DAY PARABLE OF THE UPPER ROOM

On the evening of the Fourth Sunday of Lent, when the church doors were locked, the disciples stayed at home to watch Mass online for fear of the coronavirus. Technical issues had delayed the airing of Mass. But, the people waited patiently, and Jesus came and stayed in their midst. He touched their hearts and said to them, "Peace be with you." Though they couldn't see His hands and His side, the people rejoiced as they gathered together and prayed to the Lord in their living room. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Your sins are forgiven. Forgive one another, likewise. Do not retain your own sins or the sins of your brothers and sisters."

Thomas, an essential healthcare worker was not with them when Jesus came into their home. So when he returned after his long, late night shift at the hospital, the other family members said to him, "We have been with the Lord!"

Thomas had been caring for patients and treating the victims of coronavirus all evening. He replied, "I have seen the Lord, this night!" The family doubted Thomas, saying, "Unless we see the mark of the nails in His hands and put our finger into the nail marks and put our hand into His side, we will not believe."

Now, five weeks later, the disciples were still locked inside their homes due to COVID-19, and Thomas was with them because Sunday Mass was now streamed in the morning, on time. Jesus came into their hearts, although the doors were locked and they felt Him in their midst. He said, "Peace be with you."

Thomas knelt before the crucifix and said, "This is the same Jesus I have seen in the faces of the sick and dying. I put on gloves and hold their hands. I stand by their bed and put my finger on their wrist and put my hand on their side. I believe. Do not be unbelieving, but believe also."

His family all fell to their knees and said, "My Lord and my God." Jesus said to them, "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed. Blessed are those who cannot receive my Body and Blood and still believe."

Now, many other signs of the presence of Jesus are written in the Books of the Bible. And many others signs of the presence of God throughout this crisis will be written by you and your experiences, through which others may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief all may have life in His name.