

Pastor's Column

Rev. Michael Ratajczak
michaelr@stmoside.org
760-758-4100 x100

The Wounds of Christ

As we continue to celebrate Resurrection Sunday, as we continue to meditate and reflect upon the various resurrection accounts given to us in Scripture during the "Great Fifty Days," the wounds of Christ still present in Jesus' resurrected body, cry out for attention.

The wounds are a source of intrigue and curiosity. Why are they still there?

In today's Gospel, we are given the account of Doubting Thomas who was not present the first time that the resurrected Jesus appears to the disciples. Thomas responds to the disciples who tell him that they have seen Jesus: "*Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.*"

A week later, Jesus again appears to the disciples, and this time, Thomas is present as well. Jesus says to Thomas: "*Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.*"

Thomas responds to Jesus: "*My Lord and my God!*"

To help us in our reflection upon the wounds of Christ, I share with you the words of Philip Yancey, taken from his book, *The Jesus I Never Knew*.

One detail in the Easter stories has always intrigued me:

Why did Jesus keep the scars from his crucifixion? Presumably he could have had any resurrected body he wanted, and yet he chose one identifiable mainly by scars that could be seen and touched. Why?

I believe the story of Easter would be incomplete without those scars on the hands, the feet, and the side of Jesus. When human beings fantasize, we dream of pearly straight teeth and wrinkle-free skin and sexy ideal shapes. We dream of an unnatural state: the perfect body. But for Jesus, being confined in a skeleton and human skin was the unnatural state. The scars are, to him, an emblem of life on our planet, a permanent reminder of those days of confinement and suffering.

I take hope in Jesus' scars. From the perspective of heaven, they represent the most horrible event that has ever happened in the history of the universe. Even that event, though, Easter turned into a memory. Because of Easter, I can hope that the tears we shed, the blows we receive, the emotional pain, the heartache over lost friends and loved ones, all these will become memories, like Jesus' scars. Scars never completely go away, but neither do they hurt any longer. We will have re-created bodies, a re-created heaven and earth. We will have a new start, an Easter start.

As we journey through this Feast of the Resurrection, let us take time to reflect upon our wounds and lift them up to the Lord.

Allow them to be an emblem of life on this planet and a sign of future glory!

F. Mike