



### Grain

“May no one feel there is no room for them on earth.” –Pope Francis

Submitted by Vernita Kennen, Roseville, MN

### Field

19...the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the religious authorities, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you..." 24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." 26 A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." Jn. 20:19 & 24-29

### Resource: Considering Faith, Community, and Mental Health During the COVID-19 Crisis

#### Thoughts

Peace be with you. I am extending a virtual handshake and imagining one back and between you. Please, don't get up. Jesus' words of peace follow us through time as part of our Sunday mornings and periods when we are locked in fear like the disciples.

In the midst of a pandemic, we don't have to think long to relate to anxiety. Articles about disruptions to our daily lives creating angst and trauma have popped up online. Many include advice about how to organize our days; some invite us to avoid putting pressure on ourselves to emerge out of the pandemic with a myriad of self-improvements. But I haven't seen writings on the extra layer of unrest that decision makers can add to our predicament. On April 7, how many loyal Wisconsinites had to choose between protecting their health (life) and possibly that of others and upholding our democracy? Let us not underestimate what that display of voter suppression, with a disproportionate impact on people of color and its general battering effect, did to our psyche. That was hard. Social media messages about being easy on and loving ourselves suddenly seemed more relevant.

The disciples also faced systems that failed the people. Jesus appeared and offered peace to his followers, who were frightened and scandalized. Thomas couldn't believe that the Messiah was alive. He wanted concrete proof of the new hope. Jesus said blessed are those (us) who have not seen, are not touching, but believe. Belief here isn't cognitive but refers to trusting in God and having an identity tied to our relationship with the Holy, rather than to superficial powers that silence us. Take what Jesus said to Thomas as an open invitation and blessing, and not as an admonishment for feeling anxious. Hear it as people who know there are movements of grace and the value of sharing Christ's broad realm of peace. Peace be with you. Happy Monday!

#### Share

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy