

Title: Touch Me and See  
Text: Luke 24:36–49  
Liturgical Date: Easter 3  
Calendar Date: April 27/30, 2006

Grace mercy and peace be unto you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. The text for our meditation this morning is taken from the Gospel lesson, Luke 24, where we hear again these words, "While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet." This is the text, my dear friends in Christ.

Mrs. Rene Spitz has compiled some amazing evidence pertaining to the absence of touch. In a South American orphanage, she observed and recorded what happened to 97 children who were deprived of emotional and physical contact with others. Because of a lack of funds, there was not enough staff to adequately care for these children, ages three months to three years old. Nurses changed diapers and fed and bathed the children. But there was little time to hold, touch, and talk to them as a parent would. After three months, many of them showed signs of abnormality. Besides a loss of appetite and being unable to sleep well, many of the children lay with a vacant expression in their eyes. After five months, serious deterioration set in. They lay whimpering, with troubled and twisted faces. Often, when a doctor or nurse would pick up an infant, it would scream in terror. Twenty-seven, almost one-third, of the children

died the first year, but not from lack of food or health care. They died of a lack of touch and emotional nurture. Because of this, seven more died the second year. Only 21 of the 97 survived, most suffering from serious psychological damage.

As hard as that scenario is for us to imagine, what if we had to live without the touch and love of Jesus Christ in our lives? What if we had to live without his presence because he remained in the tomb? Today he invites all of us to be touched in a new way by his promises, presence, and peace.

We have the life-giving touch of Jesus' resurrection. Jesus wanted to make certain his disciples knew he was alive. "Touch me and see!" he said. "Do you have anything to eat?" He was alive! Rather than just seeing with their eyes, Jesus encourages His disciples to touch Him. Having the chance to touch Jesus, but more importantly, to feel His touch; the disciples were changed men.

No longer did they hide in fear of the Jews. No longer did they run away and hide. No longer would they deny knowing Jesus. The touch of Jesus changed them into brave and courageous men, who were willing to share the news of the resurrection with others.

The touching news of Jesus' resurrection changes all of our tomorrows. It changes the way we live and the way we die, the way we worship and the way we work. It changes everything.

The disciples had doubts and fears, just like many of the disciples gathered in this room today. Often we find ourselves like Thomas (and all the doubting disciples) after Jesus' resurrection. Maybe its not doubting the resurrection, but the other fears that threaten us. Fears of illness, financial troubles, fears about family strife. What about

rising gas prices, terrorism, and war? All these fears threaten to steal the peace and joy that Christ brings to us.

So, we pretend to be bold, but Jesus sees right through us. He knows our doubts and fears. Even after we hear it in church, Bible class, Sunday school, and devotions, we still don't fully believe and trust for a variety of reasons. Jesus comes to us and says, "Touch me and see. I'll show you. My resurrection, my living body, is for real."

During a severe thunderstorm a mother was tucking her small son into bed. She was about to turn the light off when he asked in a trembling voice, "Mommy, will you stay with me all night?" Smiling, the mother gave him a warm, reassuring hug and said, "I can't dear. I have to sleep with Daddy." As the mother turned out the light, she heard her son say, "The big sissy!"

There is something comforting about touch when we are afraid or confused. Even little children and infants understand that. When they are afraid or upset, they cry until someone holds and comforts them.

What an amazing gift the Savior gave his disciples. He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. It wasn't done just for wisdom's sake. It was done so they could fully understand his death and resurrection, repentance, and forgiveness of sins.

Our prayer is that God would open our minds to understand Scripture. God calls us to dig into his Word so that it can take root in us. God calls us to repent of our sins and joyfully receive and share his gracious forgiveness.

Two explorers were on a jungle safari when suddenly a ferocious lion jumped in front of them. "Keep calm," one explorer whispered. "Remember what we read in that

book on wild animals? If you stand perfectly still and look the lion in the eye, he will turn and run.” “Sure,” replied his companion. “You’ve read the book, and I’ve read the book. But has the lion read the book?”

Have you read the book? Not a book on wild animals, but the book that gives direction on how to live in the most dangerous of all environments...the world. Through His Word, Jesus reaches out to us and touches us, and gives us direction on how to live in the world.

Jesus touched his disciples’ lives with the gifts of his peace, his presence, his power, and a commissioning to share what they had seen and heard with the world. He touches our lives with those same gifts, and we are changed. He touches us through his Word, Holy Communion, our baptismal gifts, and through the body of believers as we go into the world together.

He opened their minds and sent them into the world clothed with power from on high. This is no ordinary power. And there is no way this power can dry up or run out. One New Year’s Day, in the Tournament of Roses parade, a beautiful float suddenly sputtered and quit. It was out of gas. The whole parade was held up until someone could get a can of gas. The amusing thing was this float represented the Amoco Oil Company. With its vast oil resources, its truck was out of gas. Often, Christians neglect their spiritual maintenance, and though they are “clothed with power” find themselves out of gas.

Today we were personally touched by the grace and knowledge of our living Savior, Jesus Christ. He has touched us today, gifting us with his peace, his presence, his power, through the Word and the Sacraments, and a commissioning to share with

the world what we have seen and heard. The reality of Jesus' resurrection changes lives... forever! Amen.

Now may the peace of God, which passes all human understanding, keep your hearts and minds in true faith unto life everlasting, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.