

## **Sunday Gospel Reflection--John 20:19-31**

By Fr. Christopher Szarke

Dear Friends ~

I often wondered why Jesus appeared wounded after the Resurrection instead of having a healed and perfect body.

A study of the theology of this Scripture passage reveals rich symbolism of the holy through the images of the body of Christ. In seminary, I had the opportunity to study theological scholarship by Nancy Eiesland, a Candler School of Theology professor who was born with a congenital bone condition and spinal scoliosis. She had been a March of Dimes poster child in the 1960s and years later questioned images of disability in the Bible and in churches and what it meant to be a Christian woman living with disabilities. She explored these questions as she completed her master's and doctoral degrees at seminary.

Her master's thesis explored another version of today's Gospel, looking from the perspective of the Gospel of St. Luke. It was only through his death on the cross that the disciples could fully understand what his life meant and the significance of his life on earth. The disciples came to understand Jesus as he really was after the Resurrection.

During the crucifixion, the disciples witnessed the suffering servant where the final word was the tragedy of sin. At the Resurrection, the disciples witnessed God in human form, disabled with impaired hands and feet and a pierced side.

God loves us as whole and complete, just as we are, with imperfect bodies, struggles with mental health, and doubts. We share on the Christian path here, without waiting for perfection.

Peace and blessings,

Father Christopher