**Where Do We Find the Risen Christ Now?**

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All of us who were raised in the Catholic Church were taught to perform a simple ritual when entering our pew for Sunday Mass. We turn to the tabernacle, where Jesus is present in the reserved Blessed Sacrament, and we genuflect in reverence. I have seen our teachers at Mishawaka Catholic instructing the little children to genuflect in the same way at our School Masses. When I speak with children about Eucharist or adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, I always try to make sure that they understand (at some level) that Jesus, our Risen Lord, is really and truly present in that consecrated bread. However, I also emphasize that when we come to church, the Eucharist is not the *only* place where we find Christ. He is also present in the Word that is proclaimed from the Scriptures, in the priest who ministers to the people, and in all the people who are gathered to worship together.

This last point, about Christ being present in the community, derives both from Jesus’ promise that “where two or three are gathered in my name, there I will be in the midst of them,” and from St. Paul’s profound teaching about the Mystical Body of Christ. Paul explains that all of us are members of Christ’s Body, intimately connected with Christ and with each other because of the one faith and one Baptism which we share. And, of course, that communion is experienced very powerfully when we worship together and receive Holy Communion together. But, what about *now*, when public worship is suspended? Where do we find the Risen Christ *this Easter*? How do we experience that mystical communion with Christ and with each other while we are physically separated and cannot celebrate the sacraments together?

First, we should look to those elements of communion which we have *not* lost due to our temporary separation. For example, we still have the Scriptures. We can hear the Lord’s voice speaking to us through the sacred texts, whether we read them at home or hear them proclaimed at televised or livestreamed masses. During the Easter Season, Christ is especially prominent in the daily mass readings, since the whole season focuses so much on him. When we meditate on the Word in our homes, we can still hear his voice. And, when we pray with the readings for daily Mass, we can also feel connected with the rest of the Church, for our brothers and sisters in Christ are sharing the same Scriptures with us each day.

Private prayer is another point of connection with the Risen Christ which has not been suspended. We can turn to the Lord whenever and wherever we want, and know that he is present to us. Times like this highlight the need for everyone to have a personal, intimate relationship with the Lord. In more “normal” times, far too many people rely solely on the sacraments and the communal prayer of the Church to sustain their spiritual life. I suspect that many of them are now realizing that something was lacking all along. The advantage of Christ ascending to the Father after his resurrection is that he can be available to all of his disciples whenever we turn to him. We need not limit ourselves to a particular sacred space, or a particular sacred time, when others can gather with us. Anytime will do; anyplace can be our holy ground.

In addition to these familiar ways of encountering the Risen Christ in our midst, our current circumstances are also revealing him in new ways. More and more, we are seeing images of health care workers ministering to patients, “essential workers” providing services that we desperately need, and even parents caring for their children at home. The secular media rightly calls all of these people “heroes.” However, when we Christians see these daily acts of compassion and self-sacrifice, we should also see the Risen Christ, present and active among us. In health care workers, grocery clerks, postal workers, first responders, repairmen, parents, and countless other people who are striving to take care of others in these trying times, Christ is both tending his sheep and offering himself up for their sake. Let us notice and honor his presence in them, and in ourselves. And let us remain united with all of our brothers and sisters, keeping each other in prayer always, as we wait in joyful hope for the Risen Christ to lead us through this present darkness into his marvelous light.