

# Reflection for 2nd Sunday of Easter

Acts 4:32-35

1 John 5:1-6

Gospel John 20:19-31



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## The fruit of peace is solidarity and justice

How were the first followers of Jesus transformed from being a group of frightened people hiding behind locked doors, to a vibrant justice filled community that inspired others to join them? In John's Gospel we learn that the first step in this transformation process is taken by Jesus; he takes the initiative, he comes to them, meeting them where they are. Jesus doesn't just break through the "locked doors", but he breaks the cycle of violence. To those who had denied and abandoned him there is no message of retribution or judgment, but instead, "Peace be with you". With this gift of peace there also comes a task, the task to forgive others as God forgives us. This is the priority Jesus sets us; to be people of peace and reconciliation in our families, our communities and in our world.

For those first disciples a commitment to peace making, to actively following Jesus' way of nonviolence, meant they willingly endured the stigma of being called "Christian". By refusing to fight in the Roman army, or put their trust in war or weapons, they were marked out as followers of Jesus, the Jesus whom the Roman Empire had crucified. Yet they bore this stigma with pride, for having touched and been touched by the stigmata of the risen Christ, they were sent out in the power of the Spirit to show the world that it is through forgiveness, reconciliation and love, not through violence, war or retaliation, that true peace is established. The fruit of that peace, we read in Acts, is solidarity and justice.

This Easter as we embrace the gift of Christ's peace, let us pray that the Spirit will transform us, so that we may willingly bear any stigma that being followers of Jesus' way of nonviolence may bring for the sake of justice and peace.