

Mass for Peace in Baltimore

This afternoon, in this holy Mass, we have entered the healing presence of the Lord. In the Gospel we read how, after his Resurrection, Jesus appeared before the disciples and showed them his wounds, in his hands, his feet, his side. Those wounds, inflicted upon Christ crucified at Calvary became the source of healing in the Risen Lord, the conqueror of sin and death. By his wounds, we are healed.

Because we trust in the Risen Lord, because we have not seen yet still believe, we have gathered to show Jesus our wounds, the wounds of our existence.

Those wounds have been visible for all to see in the City of Baltimore which has erupted in violence in the wake of Freddie Gray's death. These are not new wounds but old ones, reopened time and time. They are wounds of unemployment, poor housing, failed schools, drugs, lack of family structure, and distrust of government and law enforcement. They are the wounds of living without hope. Peaceful protests continue to play an important role in addressing those wounds; the violence that has beset our city is not the answer. Healing comes through prayer, dialogue, and building bridges. Healing comes when we allow the Lord to guide us in being a catalyst for peace and justice in our community. So we pray that we may be healers, peacemakers, bridge builders.

And those who are part of the Malta pilgrimage to Lourdes have been encouraged by Our Lady to show the Risen Lord their wounds, their illness and maladies. I have gone on the Lourdes pilgrimage many times in the past and hope to go again next year. Whatever else, it is a moment of deep spiritual healing and refreshment as members of the Order of Malta and malades, those facing serious illnesses, come together in prayer and friendship. In that very special sanctuary, nestled in the Pyrenees, under Mary's maternal gaze, we gain the courage and confidence to entrust ourselves and our whole live to Christ, confident that his love is stronger than our sins, and stronger than our maladies. As you go forth, please remember us here in Baltimore. And please know you go forth with our love and our prayers that the Lord may keep you save, give you joy, and grant you whatever healing will best draw you closer to himself and manifest the power of his love in our midst.

May the Lord bless us and keep us always in His love!