

Homily for 4th Sunday of Easter
A Response to the Tragedy in Boston

Tell me...how did you feel? How did you feel when you heard the news...two bombings in Boston at the end of the Boston Marathon? I don't think we are very different. I started with a sense of shock, dismay and disbelief. And then it turned to anger and revenge... "I hope they get whoever did this...I hope they obliterate this evil person or persons!"

As I watched the news and heard of people dying and horrible injuries to over 150 individuals I became more and more inflamed with an anger that sought not justice but revenge. And then I stopped and said to myself: "What have I become? What have we become? How do I...how do we....respond to this madness where one violent act seems to beget yet another violent act?

Where do we go from here? What do we say? What do we do? Do we just contribute to this tidal wave of violence by giving into our emotions? Or is there another way?

Think about Christ. Let Christ into your hearts. Think of the pain and suffering, agony and violence He experienced. And if you were Jesus and if you rose from the dead, what would you want to do? Wouldn't you want revenge? Wouldn't you want to destroy those

Pharisees that brought you down and gave you up to the shame and pain of the cross? Wouldn't you want to be a bolt of lightning that destroys all these evil people who would not listen to your words but instead betrayed you?

And with that in mind, think how Christ acted after His resurrection. He was concerned for his disciples who were afraid. He reached out to those who were mourning. He gave to the gift of peace. Christ cut through all the hurt and pain and fear and instead commissioned His disciples to bring forgiveness and reconciliation and peace to the world. He did then. He does now.

We live in a violent world. I can't change that world. But I can pray to God for the strength to arm myself with God's grace, God's peace and God's love. There is a wonderful statement in the beginning of St. John's Gospel. St. John writes: "And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." We cannot allow the darkness to overcome our lives. We must bring light not death. And the darkness will never extinguish the light.

There is a quote in today's Gospel that we should not overlook. Jesus say: "My sheep...listen to my voice." Christ is calling out to us. Christ is telling us not to allow the darkness to infect our lives or poison our hearts. Christ is telling us to bring light and life into our world.

We pray for those who were killed on Monday. We pray for their grieving families. We beg God's healing on those who suffered intensely and whose lives are forever changed. We ask for the grace to be able to pray for those who did this horrible act of violence and destruction. We pray for ourselves. We pray that whenever we are faced with the evil of violence, the evil of intolerance...whenever we are confronted with fear or hatred or ignorance... we can look it in the eye and never forget that evil will not destroy us and that we will overcome that darkness for Christ is our light and He alone will guide our hearts.