

Jesus had a transformed risen body that could pass through doors yet He kept the scars. Christ could have miraculously erased those scars after the Resurrection but chose not to. They were His personal signature.

We are able to recognize someone who has changed dramatically over the years by certain marks and scars. It was only when the apostles saw the scars in His hands and side that they realized that this was the Jesus of Nazareth they knew. That's why Thomas wanted to see the scars.

Whenever we see a scar on our body, we remember how it got there. Maybe we have some scars from our own negligence or that of others. Some came intentionally through surgery and others through violence. Some of those scars are on the outside while others are on the inside, but each one has a story. The Risen Lord kept His scars as the evidence of His love.

They also help us keep His Passion and Death joined with His Resurrection. It can be spiritually distorting to separate them. If we emphasize the sufferings of Jesus, it is important to remember that those sufferings led to His Resurrection. If we reflect on the Resurrection of Jesus, we need to remember that the avenue to new life was through a crucifixion and death. The Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ are all linked. Theologians call this fusion of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ the "Paschal Mystery."

Christ's scars are also a promise. The Risen Christ showed them His scars and still has them, to show us that through Him we can have healing and spiritual victory!

Jesus knows the stories behind all our wounds, the ones on the outside and the ones on the inside. Christians do not have immunity to wounds. People slander us as they do others; people harm us as they do others; people oppose us as they do others; people deceive us as they do everybody else. The scars of Jesus should give us the confidence that real victory comes from doing God's will. The scars of the Risen Christ give us strength that comes from knowing we are on the side of the Risen and victorious Christ.

None of the circumstances outside that locked room in today's Gospel reading changed after the apostles received the peace that Jesus offered them. They still had to face the same situation they faced before He entered the locked room. They still had to face the authorities. They still had to risk going out into the streets. They still had to face the crowds who crucified Jesus. They still had to face trials and troubles as we do. The change occurred inside the room and inside them.

He gave them a strength and peace which they could not generate on their own. When we open whatever wounds we have to the healing power of Christ's truth and grace, they can become places of strength. That will be true of the Church as well as of our lives.

The scars of Jesus give us hope, strength and confidence that, through Him, our wounds can heal and even become places of new strength and grace for ourselves and for others.