

Easter 3 BCP, The Second Sunday after Easter

The Epistle. 1 St. Peter 2. 19.

The Gospel. St. John 10. 11.

From the epistle

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

It by the Lord's stripes, his wounds, that we are healed, made whole, saved. And since every one of us is made a Christ at baptism, it is in our wounds, our vulnerability, that we heal. It is in exposing them, as Jesus did, that we heal. We have no need to hide them. There is a notion that a façade of smoothness impresses others, that we must do all we can to hide our imperfections. Read the website of some commercial concern: they all read as if they are perfection incarnate. Even the church, which should know better, tries to pretend that things never go wrong. How misguided this is! You know how infuriating it is to deal with bureaucrats who refuse to acknowledge that they've made a mistake. You know how healing it is when someone acknowledges that they got it wrong. And perhaps you have witnessed the effect of letting someone else see by your tears, your wounds, that they have offended or abused you, how effective this can be in bringing reconciliation, forcing reassessment, resurrection.

It is by our wounds, our stripes, that we heal others, just as Christ's wounds heal us. This is a call for honesty, for courage to show your face to the world in its joy, its tears, its delight and its agony. Never mind about pretending that all is well: accept the fact that we are not in control: the Lord is in control. He is the shepherd who tends the flock.