



Society of the Sacred Heart

Special Chapter 2021

Opening Eucharist of the Special Chapter

HOMILY

November 10, 2021

The first day. On the evening of the first day of the week, Jesus appeared among the disciples, and he did something new. The Risen One from whose pierced heart had flowed blood and water now breathed into the disciples his own Spirit, his own life, his own mission.

Can today be for you like that first day? Not exactly, I suppose. After all, you are not huddled behind closed doors. You are everywhere, on new frontiers, living in the style of Jesus, listening to the heartbeat of God in yourselves and in the world, one united body of apostles, discovering and making known the love of God. You are not like the disciples locked in the upper room.

And yet, the Risen One does come among you again today, right now, as on that first day, doing something new, breathing into you his own Spirit, his own life, his own mission. Don't you hear his voice now in the hopes of the young, in the prayers of the poor, and in the groaning of creation? Don't you see his face in the faces of your sisters? Don't you feel his Spirit moving within you, drawing you to be one in heart and mind, locally and globally, to be more open in sharing apostolic resources, to be more discerning in service?

More discerning ... I wonder what the disciples felt when they met the Risen One on that first day. Perhaps as he breathed his Spirit into them, whatever disappointment or doubt or fear they had felt gave way to trust and courage and love as they learned to recognize his Spirit.

You, too, will need to recognize his Spirit during this chapter, to test the spirits, to identify those movements in each sister and in the body that come from the heart of Christ and to set aside movements that have other origins. That's what it means to discern. In the end, with God's grace and in the company of St. Madeleine Sophie, you will not just seek the will of God for the Society and family of the Sacred Heart, you will *find* it. You will know who you are and what you are to do.

The People of God are counting on you. We count on you to continue to discover and make known the love of God in the midst of this blessed and broken world. We hold you in prayer, and we thank you for entering confidently into this first day.

P. Douglas Marcouiller SJ